

**RUSSIAN, ISLAMIC AND AMERICAN
INFLUENCES IN CENTRAL ASIA SINCE 1991**

HALA HADDAD

PhD THESIS

**SCHOOL OF SLAVONIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON**

2007

UMI Number: U591218

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U591218

Published by ProQuest LLC 2013. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	7
1.0 INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 AIMS OF THE THESIS	9
1.2 THE MEANING OF POWER AND INFLUENCE	10
1.3 CONTRIBUTIONS	19
1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW	21
1.5 METHODOLOGY	47
1.6 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS	50
2.0 THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF CENTRAL ASIA	56
2.1 PERESTROIKA AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE USSR	56
2.2 DEMOCRATISATION THEORY	60
2.3 THE REVERSAL AND FAILURE OF DEMOCRATISATION IN CENTRAL ASIA	67
2.3.1 <i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	71
2.3.2 <i>Kazakhstan</i>	78
2.3.3 <i>Uzbekistan</i>	82
2.3.4 <i>Turkmenistan</i>	88
2.3.5 <i>Tajikistan</i>	91
2.4 CONCLUSION	95
3.0 RUSSIAN INFLUENCES IN CENTRAL ASIA SINCE 1991	99
3.1 RUSSIA'S HISTORICAL LEGACY IN CENTRAL ASIA	99
3.1.1 <i>The Tsarist Empire and Central Asia</i>	99
3.1.2 <i>The Soviet Union and Central Asia</i>	103
3.2 PATTERNS OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY SINCE THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE USSR	107
3.3 RUSSIA'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA	111
3.4 RUSSIFICATION IN CENTRAL ASIA	113

3.5	RUSSIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY _____	119
3.6	THE ROLE OF CENTRAL ASIA IN THE SECURITY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION 131	
3.7	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND CENTRAL ASIA _____	152
3.8	CONCLUSION _____	159
4.0	AMERICAN INFLUENCES IN CENTRAL ASIA SINCE 1991 _____	162
4.1	PATTERNS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA SINCE 1991 163	
4.2	AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY _____	166
4.2.1	<i>NATO's Partnership for Peace, Centrasbat and GUUAM</i> _____	166
4.2.2	<i>The War on Terror</i> _____	169
4.3	AMERICA'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA _____	181
4.4	AMERICA'S ECONOMIC INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA _____	190
4.5	AMERICA'S IMPACT ON CENTRAL ASIAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY _____	196
4.6	CONCLUSION _____	201
5.0	THE ENERGY RESOURCE DIMENSION _____	203
5.1	RESOURCE WARS AND PETRO-POLITICS _____	203
5.1.1	<i>The Status of the Caspian and its Division</i> _____	208
5.1.2	<i>Competing Influences over Kazakhstan's Energy Resources</i> _____	210
5.1.3	<i>Competing Influences over Turkmen Energy Resources</i> _____	219
5.1.4	<i>The Importance of Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik Energy Resources</i> _____	226
5.2	CONCLUSION _____	229
6.0	ISLAMIC INFLUENCES AND CENTRAL ASIA _____	231
6.1	ISLAM BEFORE INDEPENDENCE _____	233
6.1.1	<i>The Birth of Islam in Central Asia</i> _____	233
6.1.2	<i>Islam in Central Asia During the Russian Empire</i> _____	234
6.1.3	<i>Islam in Central Asia during the Soviet Era</i> _____	234
6.2	ISLAM AS A DOMESTIC RELIGION AND CULTURAL PHENOMENON IN CENTRAL ASIA. 238	
6.3	OFFICIAL ISLAM IN CENTRAL ASIA _____	244
6.4	POLITICAL ISLAM AND ISLAMIC ORGANISATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA _____	250

6.5	EXTERNAL ISLAMIC INFLUENCES ON CENTRAL ASIA: THE IMPACT OF AFGHANISTAN AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES ON POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN CENTRAL ASIA	261
6.6	CONCLUSION	270
7.0	CONCLUSION	271
7.1	COOPERATION OR COMPETITION?	271
7.2	SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS	273
7.2.1	<i>The Internal Politics of the Central Asian Countries</i>	273
7.2.2	<i>Russian Influences in Central Asia</i>	274
7.2.3	<i>American Influences in Central Asia</i>	279
7.2.4	<i>The Energy Resource Dimension</i>	281
7.2.5	<i>Islamic Influences and Central Asia</i>	283
7.3	WHICH POWER HAS THE STRONGEST COMPETING INFLUENCES AND WHY?	285
	BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES	287

ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at competing influences in Central Asia since 1991. It looks at all five Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and identifies the three main powers with competing influences as Russia, Islam and America. It aims at showing which of these three powers is the most enduring and powerful in the region according to how strong its influences are. The strengths of these influences are investigated in relation to the fields of security, politics, culture and economics.

This thesis argues that Russian influences are at present the strongest amongst most strata of the Central Asian population. Russification (which falls under cultural influence) in both its linguistic and behavioural forms is a profound contributor to Russia's firm role in the region. Russia's security, economic and particularly political influences have gradually grown in strength, giving the other two powers a larger challenge.

According to this work, Islam is a growing power in the region and has gained momentum primarily as a result of internal factors in the region, although regional and global Islamic forces are also looked at. Islam's cultural and political influences are particularly effective in the development of Islam as a power in the region.

Central Asia's geo-strategic importance was soon realised by Washington after independence. This thesis argues that competition and not cooperation characterised the relationship between Russia and America throughout the 1990's and in particular after September 11, which led to America's increased involvement in the region. The USA's economic and security-related influences have been the strongest and most successful. Its political influences have often been seen as counter-productive by pushing different segments of the population towards the other two powers. America's cultural influences come last.

This thesis has consequently provided a platform for measuring competing influences from Russia, Islam and America in Central Asia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Dr Peter Duncan, not only for his advice and support over the course of my PhD but also for greatly contributing to my interest in the Former Soviet Union and particularly Central Asia. I would also like to thank everyone whom I interviewed in Central Asia, particularly, Iris Beybutova, Dean of the School of International Relations at the Kyrgyz State National University, Vladimir Paramonov from the Centre of Economic Studies in Tashkent and Zukhriddin Khusnidinov, Rector of the Tashkent Islamic University and member of the Uzbek Cabinet of Ministers.

I would also like to thank my sisters, Reem and Lema, and my mother, Ghayda Morahli, for their continuous support and particularly my father, Suleyman Haddad, for whom this PhD could not have been completed without his help.

Finally, I would like to thank Marco Pera for his constant encouragement and for accompanying me to Central Asia

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATC	Anti-Terrorist Centre
BTC	Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
CACO	Central Asian Cooperation Organisation
CAEC	Central Asian Economic Community
CAEU	Central Asian Economic Union
CAU	Central Asian Union
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPC	Caspian Pipeline Consortium
CST	Collective Security Treaty
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
DCK	Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan
d.o	Date Originated
DOC	Department of Commerce
d.d	Date Downloaded
DDK	Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan
DPT	Democratic Party of Turkmenistan
DPT	Democratic Party of Tajikistan
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
ErK	Erkin Kyrgyzstan
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSR	Former Soviet Republic
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova
GUUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova
HT	Hizb-ut-Tahrir
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan

IRP	Islamic Renaissance Party
ISD	Islamic Spiritual Directorate
K2	Karshi-Khanabad
KKK	Korpedzhe-Kurt-Koy
KYI	Kazakh-Turkmen-Iranian
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
MRD	Motor Rifle Division
NA	Northern Alliance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRC	National Reconciliation Commission
OIC	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDPU	Popular Democratic Party of Uzbekistan
PFP	Partnership For Peace
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
S5	Shanghai Five
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SES	Single Economic Space
SNEK	Union of People's Unity for Kazakhstan
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TAP	Trans-Afghan-Pipeline
UTO	United Tajik Opposition
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aims of the Thesis

Throughout history Central Asia, defined here as the five 'Islamic' former Soviet Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, has found itself host to battling powers aimed at wooing and triumphing as the strongest players in the region. The geo-political and geo-economic importance of Central Asia has once again pushed it to the forefront of the international stage. It rests at the frontier between the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds; it borders some of the most dynamic and Islamicised countries of the 21st century such as Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. It lies between two regional powers, Russia and China, the former still over-shadowing the region from its not so distant Soviet legacy. Central Asia's energy resources and geo-strategic location have tempted Washington since independence. The real opportunity for Washington to become engaged in the region came after 11 September 2001 and the subsequent war on terror, which opened a new chapter in the history of Central Asia. All these factors have made Central Asia a battleground for competing influences in the post-independence period, which is what this thesis is aimed at researching. This thesis identifies Russia, Islam and America as the three main powers competing for influence over Central Asia. It looks at four types of influence, which enable each power to compete with the other. These four strands of influence are: cultural, political, economic and security-based. The definition of what is meant by influences, and why this thesis regards these three powers, as the main competitors will be discussed below. The aim of this thesis is to research the strengths and weaknesses of each power, and how they interact with each of the five Central Asian countries through their four different strands of influence. Hence the main research question, asks which one of these powers, Russian, Islamic or American has the strongest influence over Central Asia since 1991 and why?

1.2 The Meaning of Power and Influence

Before this section approaches the definition of ‘influence’ and the kinds of influences this thesis is concerned with, it is first important to explain what this thesis means when it refers to ‘a power’. According to this thesis, Russia, Islam and America are powers with competing influences. Describing Russia and America as powers fits the general, and broad definition of how powers are defined in social science literature. Power is often understood as a combination of capacities at the disposal of a state.¹ Aron defines powers along similar lines and says it is the ‘ability possessed by one man or a group to establish relations conforming to his or its wishes with other people or groups’.² Most definitions of ‘a power’ refer to countries, individuals or groups and their ability to use their resources to affect the behaviour of another country or countries or group of people.³ As discussed above the common definition of ‘a power’ refers to countries. A disadvantage of comparing powers deriving from a state to a power exercised by a religious tradition is that this kind of comparison comes under question as it steps outside what is traditionally done.⁴ Other disadvantages and advantages of this kind of comparison are discussed below.

One of the main contributions of this thesis is that it takes the meaning of ‘a power’ even further that what has traditionally been focused on. Islam in this thesis is also defined as ‘a power’ even though its capabilities are not institutionalized. Unlike countries it does not have a distinct set of objectives such as domestic, economic or foreign policies. A single body, such as a government, does not navigate it. This can be seen as a disadvantage as it makes it more difficult to justify how Islamic influences can be compared to influences from two countries. According to this thesis this does not weaken the ability of Islam to produce change through its different strands of

¹ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, Boston, London, 1999, pp. 64-65

² Raymond Aron, *Etudes Politiques*, Paris, 1972, p. 176

³ John G. Stoessinger, *The Might of Nations: World Politics in Our Times*, New York, 1975, pp. 26-27

⁴ When discussing my thesis in Central Asia, many would question why I chose to compare two countries to a religion. They argued that this was not what was commonly done when looking at competing influences in the region. I would reply that this was the whole point of my work; it offered a different angle, with new comparisons to how competing powers were viewed and researched.

influences (these will be discussed below). According to this thesis, it is this change that Islam can have on Central Asian politics and society, which has earned it the status of 'a power'. As this thesis shows, a power does not need to be controlled by a state to be able to change and affect the way a country is ruled or the way its population would like to be ruled, or the way they behave. This thesis focuses on what affects the internal dynamics of the Central Asian countries, what affects the political, economic, security-related and cultural directions the Central Asian countries are taking. Islam, as this thesis tries to show, plays a strong role in this process, equal to that of 'traditional' country powers, and thus should be put on par with them. The emphasis should not be on what Islam is, but on the effects it has that are of importance and relevance to this thesis. Therefore, depriving it of the status or 'a power' means very much undermining its capabilities and strengths, which this thesis (at times) shows to be far greater than that of a country. These are some of the main advantages of looking at Islam as 'a power', equal to Russia and the USA.

Cline argues that 'a power' is a state that causes the government of another state to do something it otherwise may not do.⁵ This thesis is not only concerned with states and their impact on other states, it also looks at the way the population outside the circles of the ruling elites behaves and how their behaviour could affect the state. This highlights how certain definitions of 'a power' have limitations. As this thesis will show, Russia and America are capable through their influences to have an impact on the direction the Central Asian regimes and population pursue. They are able to affect the political, social and cultural orientations different strata of the population take. Islam equally has the ability to do so and even change the face of Central Asia, as we know it today. This thesis offers a new approach to researching powers with competing influences. It emphasises the essential point that 'a power' is any force that has the capabilities to instigate change in its favour. Whether this power is a country, or group of people or a religion does not matter.

As this thesis is aimed at deriving which power has the greatest influence over Central Asia, it is also essential to define what this thesis means when influences are compared

⁵ Ray S. Cline, World Power Trends and US Foreign Policy for the 1980's, Boulder, 1980, p. 80

and discussed. Before this can be done, the definition of 'influence' by political scientists is important to underline. The basic definition of 'influence' is when one party has the ability and the will to modify the behaviour of other parties or party. According to Rubinstein, it is when a donor commits certain resources to a recipient in return for short and long-term benefits. The donor's agreement to provide aid results from its conviction that its involvement will be of benefit to itself. This can be defined in terms of advantages promoting its strategic, political, diplomatic, economic or cultural aims. The policy of a third party (often another donor) is a result of its understanding of the relationship between the original donor and the recipient. Even if both donors are external powers, their influence can show in the domestic milieu of the recipient, this adds further substance to their presence.⁶ Influence in this sense strictly means non-military. According to this thesis influence is non-military and military, it can be both soft and hard power. Soft policy has more long-term benefits; its aims are to convince and not to dictate. Influence can be opinion shaping, often not noticed by the recipient or seen as interference.⁷ In regards to this thesis, the first donor can be seen as Russia, the second donor as America and the third as Islam; the recipient is Central Asia. This thesis primarily looks at Islam as an internal power, although it also points out to instances when Islam has external influences as well. Most definitions of influence fit well when discussing external powers, such as countries as donors. Islam as a power lacks the infrastructure which Russia and America have to help them exert their influences, its strengths are more related to its historic legacy and advancing its cultural, social and political objectives. Its economic objectives are limited. This does not mean that its influence is weaker; it holds strong influence over the recipient's domestic scene. It is an invisible persuader, which can profoundly change and mould the opinion of certain groups in Central Asia. Islam's strength comes from within Central Asian society, and sometimes as a result of America's (or Russia's) relationship with Central Asia. It is hard to compete with as it lies in the hearts and minds of groups and individuals within Central Asian society.

⁶ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, 'Assessing Influence as a Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis', in Alvin Z. Rubinstein (ed.), Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World, New York, Washington, London, 1975, pp. 1-18

⁷ Christopher Hill, The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, 2003, pp. 134-136

The term ‘competing influences’ is becoming increasingly used when referring to Central Asia, yet it is seldom well defined. It is easy to talk about different influences without having a clear definition or picture of how these influences are enhancing Russian, Islamic or American presence amongst all strata of the population and government. The influences researched in this thesis are segmented into four branches related to the security of Central Asia, the domestic politics, economics and culture. It is the mix of these four different influences, which enables Russia, Islam or the USA to have the greatest say in how each country functions and works, and where each country sees its interests. These four strands of influence affect the pivotal concerns, needs and decisions of the Central Asian governments and population. The following paragraphs will explain the methodology of how the above influences are measured in this thesis.

Politically all five Central Asia countries are closer to the Russian model of governing than to the American model or an Islamic one. The Soviet legacy of governing still looms over their political system, giving Russia a strong political influence; in addition four Central Asian countries are member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Turkmenistan officially stopped its permanent membership in 2005, and instead became an associate member. This new position, Ashgabad argued, was more in line with the country’s status of permanent neutrality.⁸ In terms of democratisation, both Russia and Central Asia have struggled to sustain the levels of liberalism and elements of democratisation first seen at the beginning of the 1990’s. Russian political influence is less threatening than Islamic or American political influence. It accepts the status quo, and over the years, since the break-up of the USSR, Russia has increasingly edged closer to the style of governing common amongst Central Asian elites. The problems and criticisms that Russia faces today, in terms of its commitment to democratic elements, are very similar to those found in Central Asia. Although Russia’s political influence over the Central Asian regimes is profound, the Central Asian regimes face obstacles that are less confrontational in the Russian political system. One of the main threat to all Central Asian governments, regardless of the

⁸ Valentinas Mite, ‘CIS: Turkmenistan Reduces Ties to Associate Member’, Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, d.o (date originated) 29.8.05, d.d (date downloaded) 25.5.06, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/08/26dab4c9-5ba1>

actual levels of Islamicisation in their country, is inspired by the fear of increasing levels of Islamicisation, which may threaten the political status of the country. Political Islam has a considerable amount of influence over the domestic political milieu in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and especially in Tajikistan, where an Islamic party forms part of the government. There is collective concern that the political Islamicisation of one country will have effects on the other countries, especially if this influence originates from Uzbekistan, which borders all the other Central Asian countries. Both Russia and Islam have political influences over Central Asia, the former by far more than the latter, although the latter's influence appears to be on a rise. America's political influence in terms of the structure and attitude of the domestic political models is the weakest. It is important to remember that although America's political influence is relatively weak compared to the other two powers, its strength in other spheres enables it to indirectly have a stronger political role. For example, America's strong economic and security-related influences enable it to get more involved in the domestic political scene. This is how influences interact and link. America's domestic political role is aided by its strong influence over other aspects of Central Asian affairs.

In terms of cultural influences, the Central Asians- to different degrees depending on where they are from-are still under the influence of linguistic and behavioral Russification. The Russian way of life and culture is seen in the way the Central Asians (especially the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz) behave, think, talk, dress, and drink. In Kazakhstan specifically, Russia has even had an influence on the national identity of some sections of the population. The historic legacy has moulded the beliefs and attitudes of the vast majority of Central Asians, giving Russian cultural influences a superior position to the influences of any other power. Islam's cultural influences should not be underestimated. Although they are weak in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the north of Kyrgyzstan, Islamic cultural influences can not be ignored in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and the south of Kyrgyzstan. Headscarves are seen on women in the latter groups of countries, Islamic greetings are used, mosques and madrassas are frequently found, as are other symbols of Islam. It is the strong cultural Islamic influence on society that has allowed for the evolution of political Islam. This is where cultural and political Islamic influences are to some extent interlinked. The roots of Islamic extremism cannot develop without an Islamic culture, although a strong

Islamic culture does not have to result in Islamic extremism. Other domestic factors, which this thesis also covers, contribute to extremism. American cultural influences are weak in comparison to the other two powers, and also very badly researched, which is where this thesis offers another contribution. As previously mentioned, America's political influence can be enhanced as a result of Washington's strong economic and security-related influences in the region; American cultural influences are more difficult to develop. Economic and security-related influences are the easiest to develop and the most susceptible to change, followed by political influence. Cultural influences on the other hand are more stable and permanent, as culture is a result of years of development. Nevertheless, American cultural influence cannot be underestimated; as Zbigniew Brzezinski states, American culture has unchallenged appeal.⁹ American food chains are not found anywhere in Central Asia, although, for example, hamburgers and hot-dogs and other American kinds of food are. Washington is attempting to promote education in English in universities, and American pop music is undeniably popular.

Russia also has a strong presence in security-related influences. It has two military bases in the region, more than any other power, and its 201st Motor Rifle Division (MRD) and government played a crucial role in ending the Tajik civil war, which threatened to engulf the region under a green Islamic banner. The events in Andijan in May 2005 also raised speculation that the Russian army played a role in dealing with the unrest. Whether this is true or not is unknown, but the mere fact that Russia had been named as the only foreign power mediating and calming the situation during the unrest of the Andijan events, suggests that Russia is very much seen as a security provider for even the least (at that time) pro-Russian Central Asian government. Russia has also often played a mediating role in disputes between stronger and weaker Central Asian countries. After Andijan, Russia has engaged in military exercises with Uzbekistan, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) seems to have developed into the strongest organisation Russia and the Central Asian countries are involved in. This organisation heavily depends on Chinese participation, and has proven to be far more effective and stable than CIS organisation. It is slowly becoming

⁹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geo-Strategic Imperatives (hereafter The Grand Chessboard), New York, 1997, p. 25

the most reliable security-concerned organisation in the region, especially at a time when security is becoming a vital priority in domestic policy.¹⁰

In terms of security threats, the Taliban movement and the extremist Central Asian organisations that were aided by Al-Qaida and the Taliban were the greatest security threats the region has seen in a very long time. The survival and continued strength of the Taliban regime (before Operation Enduring Freedom) brought fears of an uncontrollable wave of Islamicisation across the region. The USA was the only power able to alleviate this fear; this was the ultimate security-providing test, and Washington was able to deliver what Russia could not. This brought Washington closer to the domestic affairs of the region. American bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan gave Washington a foothold in the region, and an opportunity to diversify American influences. The most prominent security-providing role that Islam has played in the region was the Iranian participation in the cease-fire that brought an end to the Tajik civil war. The Islamic Republic of Iran gave Islam a security-related influence. Islam in this thesis is mainly seen as an internal power although the above example shows how Islam can have both internal and external influences on Central Asia.

American economic influences are strong in the region, and although most Central Asian countries have had a vast amount to gain from American investments, aid packages and pipeline projects, none of them have changed their internal political system to better suit that of the USA. As discussed above, Central Asia's internal political affairs have been consistent with the Russian model, although Washington's strong economic influences have had an impact on some of these countries' foreign policy orientations. Hence economic influences have had an effect on foreign policy. Uzbekistan could not continue its firm relationship with Washington, and be a large recipient of American foreign aid without having to align its foreign policy to America. Kyrgyzstan's and especially Kazakhstan's aspirations to improve their economic milieu, and diversify their energy outputs has meant having to maintain and improve their relationship with the greatest economic power in the world. This has not

¹⁰ K. K Tokaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, discussing 'Kazakhstan in the Context of the Geo-Politics of the Caspian' at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 9.3.06

been done by introducing fundamental changes to the domestic scene, but by diversifying their foreign policy. Russia's economic influence should not be underestimated. Moscow's control of most of the energy networks will for a long period of time keep the energy rich Central Asian countries under its fold. In addition, Russia does not make internal political demands on the Central Asian countries for the economic assistance it delivers, which consequently makes it a preferred partner.

Uzbekistan remains more aligned to Russia in its internal political model than to any of the other two powers. It portrayed (at least for most of the period this thesis is concerned with) an interesting combination of strong Russian domestic influences but a pro-American foreign policy. In foreign policy, Karimov more than any other Central Asian leader, gave Washington the greatest amount of influence. Uzbekistan was the only Central Asian country to firmly align itself in the American camp of CIS nations. It withdrew from the Russian led Collective Security Treaty (CST) and joined American-sponsored GUUAM (Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova). It allowed an American base to be set up on its soil, and gave the USA its undeniable support in the war on terror, consequently creating warm bilateral and diplomatic links. This enabled Tashkent to be the recipient of the largest amount of foreign aid given to any Central Asian country. Kazakhstan's foreign policy has been more consistent with its domestic affairs. Its domestic political system and foreign policy have been aligned to Russia, although in early 2006 it showed increasing desire to further its relationship with NATO with the objective of becoming the first Central Asian country to become a permanent member of the organisation. Kyrgyzstan has followed a similar pattern to Kazakhstan; its domestic and foreign policies are more aligned to Moscow than to America or the Islamic world, although like Kazakhstan it has at times shown signs of a trend to balance its foreign policy in ways that do not antagonise the USA. Tajikistan's foreign policy lies firmly in the Russian camp; it has a Russian military base on its soil, and the Rahmonov regime is substantially loyal to Moscow. Turkmenistan prides itself in having a neutral foreign policy in spite of its Soviet internal political model. As a result of Russia's political, economic and cultural influences on the country, it appears probable that after the end of the Niyazov regime, Russia is more likely to become involved in the country's internal and external policies than any other power. From the above it seems that there often exists a relationship

between different influences. For example, Russia's strong domestic influences often (but not always) result in good foreign relations, while America's strong economic influences also affect its foreign policy with the Central Asian countries. American security-related influences in Kyrgyzstan (military base) have undeniably also improved the two countries' foreign links. American foreign relations with Turkmenistan reached a peak when the Trans-Afghan-Pipeline (TAP) was an active project. This relationship may be resumed if the TAP project will be reopened in the future.

1.3 Contributions

Although this thesis fits the general trend of what other academics have written in regards to competing influences over contemporary Central Asia, it has also offered some contributions in areas where research had previously been weak. In addition, it has provided definitions, which have in the past not been thoroughly examined. Competition for influence over Central Asia has been a pivotal point for this thesis even when the general opinion, especially at the initial stages of the war on terror, was more inclined to see cooperation than competition unfold between Moscow and Washington. Concern at not reincarnating cold war attitudes and language between Washington and Moscow have at times resulted in open declarations of cooperation and friendship, although each power's actions and indirect verbal rivalry has often gone against the interest of the other. This was most recently seen with the SCO declaration in 2005, that American foreign bases in Central Asia had outlived their welcome and usefulness.

Islam as a power with competing influences is not widely researched. It is often written about as a threat, a destabilising force but not as a competing power with competing influences. The fact that it is an internal force and not just one derived from a specific external country does not weaken its claim as a power capable of changing the face of Central Asia as we know it today. In addition, although this thesis primarily argues that the main forces behind the escalation of Islam in the region are a result of internal factors, external factors also play a role on the rise of Islamic sentiments. The term 'Islam' as a competing power with influences does not only refer to the growth of political Islam¹¹ but also to secular Islam¹² (both these terms will be more clearly defined in the chapter looking at Islamic influences and Central Asia), both ultimately weaken the influences of the other two powers. As discussed in the previous section, it is harder to define Islam as a power, as it does not have a base from which it can exert its force. Nevertheless, its influences, as already stated, have repeatedly stirred changes

¹¹ Political Islam is when religion plays a role in state affairs; in the way the country is governed.

¹² Secular Islam is non-politicised Islam. Secular Islam is Islam's cultural influence on a population. It refers to the way people act, behave and perceive themselves.

and created concern for individual Central Asian countries and the region in general. Islam is often overlooked by academics as a competing power with competing influences simply because competing powers are traditionally countries (external forces). Islam is a hidden power, affecting the very mindsets of those that determine which power is the most enduring in the region. This is where this thesis offers another contribution to the academic literature; it argues that internal and external powers can be compared; that Russian, Islamic and American influences can be placed on the same level. Traditionally this has not been the common way of comparing competing influences. Influences do not need to be slotted in either external or internal categories. This thesis makes it clear that external powers, such as Russia (and America) also have internal influences. One of Russia's main advantage points is that it has such a profound cultural influence on Central Asian society. This is an internal influence from an external power. External and internal influences can overlap; separating them does not allow for the full understanding of the total effects of Russia, Islam and America on Central Asia. The literature review below further highlights the areas where this thesis has contributed to the Central Asian academic arena.

1.4 Literature Review

As a result of the ever-increasing amount of literature dedicated to Central Asia, which indicates the growing international/academic interest and importance of this region, it has been extremely difficult to choose what to include in this review. There are far too many books that deserve to be reviewed than this review has allowed for. Many items of literature used in this thesis have been very beneficial and essential to any Central Asian specialist; this review has picked a few of these items and analysed their weaknesses and strengths, in addition to how this thesis has contributed to the literature available. This review has divided the items of literature used into three groups. The first one looks at multi-authored volumes that analyse influences of different powers in Central Asia. These items of literature can be seen as the predecessors of this thesis, as they attempt to discuss or at least lay out competing influences in the region. The second groups of works are single authored, and look at the internal and external policies of the Central Asian countries and the influences that affect them. Hence the second collection of books is able to compare influences more consistently and effectively, which is a weakness of the multi-authored volumes. The third group of books looks at items of literature, which are particularly good for specific chapters in the thesis.

Peter Ferdinand's multi-authored volume, The New Central Asia and its Neighbours¹³, is a good example of a piece of literature written during the early years of independence when it was not yet totally clear which players would engage in the region. Shirin Akiner dedicates a chapter called 'Post-Soviet Central Asia'¹⁴, primarily to the domestic affairs of Central Asia, such as geography, ethnic composition, historic legacies, political organisations, religion, the economy, social issues, and regional stability. There is no reference to a power, internal or external, affecting the orientation of the region.

¹³ Peter Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia and its Neighbours (hereafter The New Central Asia), London, 1994

¹⁴ Shirin Akiner, 'Post-Soviet Central Asia' in Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia, pp. 4-36

Grigory Bondarevsky and Peter Ferdinand's chapter on 'Russian Foreign Policy and Central Asia'¹⁵ lays out Russia's past and present role in the region. What has to be kept in mind is that this volume was written in the Kozyrev period, when Russian foreign policy was the most distanced from Central Asian affairs, and when Russian influences were perhaps at their weakest in the post-Soviet era. Ultimately, this chapter falls short of evidence and analysis of Russia's engagement in the region vis-à-vis other powers. The authors warn of the increasing role of Islam, and give an indication of its growing popularity. They argue that increased trends of Islamicisation could cause a rift between Christian orthodox Russia and Muslim Central Asia. In their view, both groups of people are searching for a new identity, which they could find in religion. Thus the concept of Eurasianism is marginalised, which both Russia and Central Asia (mainly Kazakhstan) are very dedicated to. The Kazakh government has even built the Gumilev Eurasian State University in Almaty; this can be interpreted as a symbol of the Kazakh Eurasian identity. Consequently, the authors also overlook the effects of linguistic and behavioral Russification, when they argue that religion could cause a breakdown in Russian Central Asian relations. In addition, the authors are not acknowledging that secular Islam and Russian foreign policy have in the past (inside and outside the region) been compatible, therefore Russia's involvement in the region domestically and externally may not spark a wave of Islamicisation, which is what the authors suggest.

The authors completely overlook Russian political, cultural, and security-related influences as well, and only make a brief acknowledgment of economic influences. According to Bondarevsky and Ferdinand, economic influences and other aspects of Russian-Central Asian interaction are primarily seen to benefit the Central Asian countries. Russia's advantages from remaining prominent in the region both for its own economic situation and for its reputation as a 'power' are completely underestimated. In addition, there is a need for a more analytical approach when looking at Russian-Central Asian relations, and for an awareness that there exist different internal and external characteristics in each country that should be examined individually.

¹⁵ Grigory Bondarevsky and Peter Ferdinand, 'Russian Foreign Policy and Central Asia' in Ferdinand (ed.), *The New Central Asia*, pp. 36-55

Phil Robins's chapter on 'The Middle East and Central Asia'¹⁶ is characteristic of the period in which the book was written. In the early 1990's there was a certain amount of speculation that the Middle East would have some form of influence over the development of the newly independent Central Asian countries. Robins, admittedly gives reasons why the Middle East as a region is not as important to Central Asia as first expected. The very fact that a chapter has been dedicated to the Middle East and Central Asia is indicative of the controversy at the time over the orientations of the region.

Anthony Hyman dedicates his chapter to the region's relationship with Afghanistan and South Asia.¹⁷ This was the period when the Taliban had not yet shown the extent of their extremism and destabilising affects that they later became associated with; thus relations with Afghanistan were not seen with as much skepticism as they were a few years later. Nevertheless, the author does acknowledge Afghanistan (and Tajikistan) as countries contributing to regional instability. The ethnic links between the Tajiks, Turkmen and Uzbeks in Afghanistan are some of the most important aspects that bind Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan to Afghanistan. Hyman explains these connections. Afghanistan certainly played a large role in Central Asia's domestic affairs throughout the 1990's, more as a result of the growth of political Islam, which threatened to spill into Central Asia, than as a result of ethnic fraternity. Hyman does not differentiate between external Islamic influences and domestic reasons for Islamicisation. This thesis differentiates between these two methods of Islamic influences. In addition the Islamicising effects of the Taliban were very different in each of the five Central Asian countries. The author then looks at Pakistan and India's effects on the region and argues that Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, having strong ethnic, religious and economic bonds, will continue to strengthen their relationship with Central Asia whether or not these countries break away from Russia's shadow. These three countries have no doubt continued to have contact with the Central Asian region, but their economic, and ethnic bonds have not profoundly developed since

¹⁶ Philip Robins, 'The Middle East and Central Asia' in Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia, pp. 55-75

¹⁷ Anthony Hyman, 'Central Asia's Relations with Afghanistan and South Asia' in Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia, pp. 75-95

1994. Today, these countries, especially India and Pakistan are on the periphery of Central Asian politics and foreign policy.

Another chapter by Ferdinand is dedicated to Central Asia and China¹⁸. This chapter was very beneficial to this thesis as it traces reasons for the escalation of Chinese influences in Central Asia. This thesis does not look at China as having competing influence (the reasons for this are explained in the chapter related to Russian influences in Central Asia) but does acknowledge the gradual growing role of China in the region. Ferdinand looks in particular at the Xinjiang region, and its bonds with Central Asia. This is very relevant today, (more so than in 1994) because it gives Beijing a shared area of concern with the Central Asian countries. Xinjiang, being the hotbed for religious extremism in China, gives cause for Beijing to create regional security-based organisations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which are aimed at fighting extremism, separatism and secessionism. Ferdinand offers an introduction to the relationship between Beijing, Xinjiang and Central Asia. His chapter is generally too focused on the historical legacies between these two places, making it slightly out of date even for 1994. Nevertheless it is good in the way it shows China to be a power difficult to ignore in Central Asia's political affairs.

Roy Allison and Lena Jonson's collective volume, Central Asian Security: The New International Context, shares many similarities with this thesis.¹⁹ This volume was one of the first to offer a clear layout of the main competing powers in the region and their influences, and was extremely useful when analyzing the three main powers this thesis is concerned with. By 2001 it had already become clear that Russia, Islam and America were prominent players in the Central Asian arena. Since September 11 and the war on terror, the main players in the region have become better defined as the scope of competition has unfolded. After September 11, both America and Russia became more overtly involved in the region, and to a much more intense level. Islam has also become more prominent in its affects on politics and culture. These conditions were not present in 2001; hence this volume can be seen as a kind of predecessor to

¹⁸ Peter Ferdinand, 'The New Central Asia and China' in Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia, pp. 95-107

¹⁹ Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context (hereafter Central Asian Security), Washington, D.C, 2001

this thesis as it does not incorporate the changes that the war on terror brought to the region.

The first chapter is dedicated to Central Asia's security,²⁰ and discusses Russia's relative weakness in the region in the 1990's, and the Central Asian countries' quest to diversify their security policy relations outside the scope of the CIS. It also offers an introduction to the rest of the volume. This thesis also argues that the Central Asian countries were eager to find new security alliances, this was seen in their participation in NATO's partnership for peace programme (PFP), the creation of Centrasbat (with American assistance), military training under American supervision, and the participation of Uzbekistan in GUUAM. Jonson and Allison discuss the Central Asian security complex and how the security policies of all five countries are very much interlinked. This is an issue which this thesis also covers, and argues that whether each Central Asian country acknowledges it or not, the stability and security of each country, including Russia, is very much interlinked or at least has some effects on the behaviour of other regional countries. Jonson and Allison's analysis of how outside powers can affect regional security is very similar to the analysis this thesis puts forwards. They argue that the dynamics between two outside powers focusing on a region may result in rivalry and tension, consequently affecting internal regional dynamics. This is what this thesis calls competing influences, which it argues have been building up since independence, and profoundly strengthened after September 11 and the USA's new role in the region. While this thesis placed two external powers as rivals-Russia and America, Jonson and Allison also include Iran, Turkey and China.

Martha Brill Olcott's chapter²¹ does not look at powers and competing influences, but gives an analysis of the history of the region and mainly focuses on the internal issues, which affect the five countries. This chapter could have been more complete had it included more scope and detail for the lack of democratisation in each country. Instead this chapter offers a brief and simple introduction to Central Asia.

²⁰ Allison and Jonson, 'Central Asian Security: Internal and External Dynamics' in Allison and Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security, pp. 1-22

²¹ Martha Brill Olcott, 'Central Asia: Common Legacies and Conflicts' in Allison and Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security, pp. 24-48

Alexei Malashenko's chapter on Islam in Central Asia²² clearly acknowledges the Islamicisation process in the region, although he refers to Islam as a factor and not a power with competing influences. He clarifies that Islam is spreading amongst most societies, including in its political form, and points out that this is causing growing concern for the elites of even the least Islamic countries, forcing them to crack down on Islamic opponents. He does not include the process of cracking down on all opposition, Islamic or not, which is also occurring in the name of limiting political Islam. Malashenko places Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as the Central Asian countries most prone to Islamicisation. This thesis also places importance on the Islamicisation process in Kyrgyzstan, which is slightly underestimated in this chapter. Although Kyrgyzstan is by no means the center of Islamic activity, the south of the country is home to a growing trend of Islamists, who often support the involvement of religion in state affairs. Malashenko discussed the main Islamic parties and movement in the region and puts forward the argument that these groups have grown in popularity as a result of the elites not being able to sufficiently deal with the growing social and economic crisis in their countries. This thesis argues along similar lines, and emphasised the appeal of religion in societies with social, economic and political problems.

Malashenko also discusses external Islamic influences (although he does not call them that), such as the Taliban in Afghanistan. Similar to this thesis, he argues that concern over the Taliban regime was not a result of the possibility that the Taliban would spread into Central Asia, but more because it was feared that political Islam and the spread of extremism might spill into Central Asia and become appealing to some Central Asians, particularly in the Ferghana Valley. Malashenko then points out to events that made radical Islam a regional concern, and which ultimately also affected Russia. The 1999 Tashkent bombings and the Batken incursions in 1999 and 2000 by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) are covered. It is in this section that this thesis disagrees with Malashenko, who argues that during some of these incidents, the IMU and Hizb-ut-Tahrir (HT) interacted and worked together. This thesis clearly explains the differences between each Islamic party/movement and highlights their

²² Alexei Malashenko, 'Islam in Central Asia' in Allison and Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security, pp. 49-68

opposing tactics, which ultimately prevent them from working together. Malashenko does not analyse these differences, and puts forward the idea of collaboration, which this thesis disagrees with.

Malashenko places a lot of importance on the growing Islamic identity of the people of Central Asia, and says that this to some extent has affected their relationship with Christian Orthodox Russia. This thesis does not disagree with the bases of this argument, but also places a lot of emphasis on Russification in both its forms (as a counter-balance to this process), which Malashenko appears to have overlooked. Malashenko does, however, emphasize the increase of Russian security-related influences on Central Asia as a result of the growth of Islamic extremism in the region. He argues that this phenomenon increased Russian influence (he uses the word influence) and consequently affected Central Asia's foreign policies towards Russia as well. There is no reference to the role the USA played in the region in regards to security, which by the late 1990's had become part of Washington's strategy. Malashenko writes a very good chapter on Islam in Central Asia but does not sufficiently link his findings to other players or factors also involved in the area (although he does write about Russia), and how this generally affects the policies of each Central Asian country and the region as a whole.

As with most literature written by Lena Jonson on Russia's role in Central Asia, her chapter in this volume is of great interest and benefit to all those looking at Russian influences in the post-Soviet era.²³ In spite of conflicting analysis between her findings and those in this thesis, this chapter highlights different strands of Russia's role in the region, which took a much milder and ambiguous form than they did in the post-September 11 era. Jonson names the four strands of influences, economic, political, cultural and security-related, on which this thesis bases the strength of competing powers, and argues that Russia is the strongest in the security sphere than in any of the others. This is an indication that the approach taken by this thesis to identify the most determining 'influences' is one Jonson would agree with. Jonson argues that in the

²³ Lena Jonson, 'Russia and Central Asia', in Allison and Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security, pp. 95-126

security sphere, Russia is becoming increasingly undermined by the role played by other external powers in the region. (Thus hinting at a clash of interest in the region).

Jonson traces the evolution of Russian interest in the region throughout the 1990's, and places security related policies as a priority for Russia. She stresses the concern of Russia becoming marginalised in this sphere as a result of Central Asia's willingness to allow other external powers, such as America and China, to become engaged with its affairs. She gives the example of NATO's PFP programme as a counter policy to Russia's military involvement in Central Asia. The Islamic threat is emphasised by Jonson as an area of concern uniting Russia and Central Asia in the security field; Islam is never referred to as a competing power like the USA or China.

Jonson's next section is dedicated to Russia's military and security relationship with the region. The first regional defence/security-related organisation bringing Russia and the Central Asian countries together was the CST, which Jonson hints (again) was challenged with the growing role of the NATO's PFP programme. As this section mainly focuses on security issues, Jonson could have gone into more detail about the CST, what its main aims, priorities and weaknesses were. Uzbekistan's relationship with Russia is then approached. Jonson traces the change in Tashkent's relationship with Moscow and its orientation away from Russia, and Russian centered regional groupings. The chapter concerned with Russian influences in this thesis is a more detailed continuation to Jonson's work. For example it looks at Russia's security-related relationship (as well as economic, cultural and political) with each of the five Central Asian countries separately. Jonson also does this in a simplified and brief manner; she does not give as much detail and analysis of regional organisations, reasons for membership, relationship between members and competing parallel security-structures. This is clearly seen with her analysis of Uzbek-Russian relations.

Jonson identifies three factors that have the potential to ignite conflict in the region. These are the Tajik factor, the Uzbek factor and the Afghan factor. The Tajik factor very much translates into an 'Islamic factor', which is by no means a Tajik phenomenon but a Central Asian one in general, in spite of Tajikistan's partly religious civil war. Jonson places too much power in Uzbekistan when referring to the Uzbek

factor, and Uzbekistan's regional power base. This thesis argues that with so many competing and potentially competing influences in the region, Uzbekistan's role as a 'power' should not be over-estimated. In addition, Uzbekistan's Islamic problems in the past three years have often appeared more volatile than that of Tajikistan. The Afghan problem still exists today but it not so much of a 'problem' as it was when this volume was published, as the Taliban regime has in theory ceased to exist. Again this Afghan problem according to this thesis falls under the Islamic factor.²⁴

As seen above, this chapter touches on all the relevant issues regarding Russia and Central Asia. Jonson talks about Russia having economic, cultural, security-related and political influences but does not show the extent of these influences on each of the five Central Asian countries in as much detail and analysis as this thesis, neither does she show how these influences, especially in terms of security, compare to the influences of other powers. Comparing competing influences helps reveal the strength of the power in concern. This thesis offers this continuity.

Stephen Blank's chapter on the United States and Central Asia²⁵ clearly recognises the tools of influence the United States can offer the Central Asian countries. He speaks of Washington's economic and political interests and military-security cooperations. He places emphasis on economic interests, especially in regards to energy relations, making this chapter also essential for the chapter in this thesis concerned with petro-politics and pipelines.²⁶ He identifies Central Asia's energy resources as one of the reasons the United States is so concerned with the region, and exposes the competition between Russia and America in this field.²⁷ He reiterates Washington's rhetoric in

²⁴ For additional reading look at: Sultan Akimbekov, 'The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and the Prospects' in Boris Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?*, Armonk, NY, London, 2002, pp. 69-113

²⁵ Stephan Blank, 'The United States and Central Asia' in Allison and Jonson (eds.), *Central Asian Security*, pp. 127-146

²⁶ It is interesting to look at Michael Kaser and Santosh Mehrotra's chapter, 'Natural Resources and their Exploitation', in Roy Allison (ed.), *Challenges from the Former Soviet South*, Washington, DC, 1996 and note the lack of emphasis on untapped and unexploited energy resources attracting competition amongst potential players in Central Asia. This thesis argues the opposite; by saying that energy related influences are part of the competition for power in the region.

²⁷ Nancy Lubin as early as 1994 also talked about the temptations of Central Asia's energy resources for the USA. Lubin emphasises that at that stage Washington was concerned not to antagonise Russia in regards to America's dealings with Central Asia. Washington had already seen the economic opportunities that lay behind having influences over this region. What this thesis argues is that

regards to its proclaimed democratic values and notes that they are not as successful as Washington would like. It is at this point that Blank could have discussed America's political influence on each of the Central Asian countries, and how they have served (or not) to promote democratic values. Blank touches on these issues but could have delved into more detail, especially in regards to Washington's relationship with the Karimov regime. There is no mention of the relevance of GUUAM, although NATO's PFP is discussed. Again at this stage, it might have also been appropriate to mention Russia's CST, its members and purpose, and how or if, it functioned as a parallel security structure rivaling America's security and military role in Central Asia.

There is also very little mention of Islamic extremism, and how this could destabilise the security of the region and infringe on America's interests. This was an issue Russian security organisations were well aware of. Blank does not see Islam as a competing influence, or much of an influence at all on Central Asian politics, security and society. Although his chapter is dedicated to America's role in Central Asia, and a separate chapter on Islam exists in this volume, Blank places a lot of emphasis on Iran, which by 2001 had already appeared as a peripheral influence on Central Asia, but hardly mentions the Islamic threat that the Tajik civil war unleashed on the region. Blank does not look at cultural influences, and America's disadvantage in this sphere vis-à-vis all the other powers in the region. He talks about Central Asia being under the sovereignty of Russia and its colonial tentacles; overlooking elements of Russification that would make some Central Asians give a far less critical description of their relationship with Moscow.

The edition of the Journal of International Affairs titled 'Central Asia: The Road Ahead'²⁸, highlights the whirlpool of competitiveness in the Central Asian arena. Similar to the two volumes above, the authors highlight the aims of the power discussed, and its vision and impact on the region. This number, written after the

throughout the 1990's competition has been an underlying issue between Russia and America. It has inevitably increased and become more overt over the years. Lubin writes at the early stages of the Russian-American competition and identifies that such a problem could arise. For further reading look at: Nancy Lubin, 'Central Asia: Issues and Challenges for United States Policy' in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (eds.), The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and its Borders, London, New York, 1994, pp. 261-272

²⁸ 'Central Asia: The Road Ahead', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003

events of September 11 and therefore sufficiently up to date, encompasses most of the issues this thesis is concerned with. Its chapters examine the main players that have an impact on contemporary Central Asia and the region's evolution in the international arena of the 21st century. Part one of the issue deals with the internal environment of the region; the first chapter looks at Islam and Islamicisation. Edward Walker describes Islam (political) as one of the main methods of resistance to the regimes today.²⁹ This situation, he argues, is one of the main security threats to Central Asia; political Islam has become the core method at opposing the existing regimes in particularly because other methods at resisting the growing authoritarianism of the regimes have failed to deliver the same extent of mobilisation. He argues that only Islam has offered a concrete program of social transformation able to compete with the repressive governments. He outlines the core strengths of Islamicisation, while at the same time he argues that this is not enough for political Islam to flourish in the region just yet. He argues that the downfall of the Taliban regime has made the Islamicisation of Central Asia less likely. Here he fails to mention other elements that profoundly halt the acceleration of political Islam, such as behavioral Russification.

Walker then makes a very optimistic analysis; he says most Central Asian countries, with the exception of Tajikistan, have been stable since independence. This statement best fits the internal situation in Kazakhstan, but is rather hopeful for the other three Central Asian countries (Tajikistan not included). Throughout Akayev's tenure, hostility and protest towards his regime sharply rose throughout the 1990's and finally reached its climax with the events that led to the Tulip revolution, and consequently his removal from power. Walker does make distinctions between the Islamic environment in the south and north of the country but does not sufficiently highlight the rising threat of Islamicisation in the south, and how this has created a north/south divide. Not enough is said about HT and the level of its support, and how it acquires this support.

Walker's assumption that political Islam will not flourish in Kazakhstan is supported by this argument that the economic performance of the country on the whole is high,

²⁹ Edward W. Walker, 'Islam, Islamism and Political Order in Central Asia', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 21-43

and that a good standard of living often diminishes the need to seek refuge in Islam. He does not, however, mention that Islam does not need to flourish in Kazakhstan in order to create an unstable environment for it. If Islam dominates the political scene or increases in strength in any of the other Central Asian countries, then this could have a destabilising effect on Kazakhstan. Turkmenistan has not had the type of protests seen in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, but that does not mean that it is more stable or immune to Islamicisation. The Turkmenbashi's suffocating grip on power and on his people makes it difficult to assess what the most dynamic forces are.

Walker argues that Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have witnessed the most amount of Islamic instability. The Uzbek regime has been struggling with the rise in Islamicisation since the late 1990's. Walker makes strong parallels between the increase in government repression against all forms of opposition, and the rise in number of individuals joining Islamic organisations, especially since Karimov's warm relationship with America after September 11. A brief analysis is made of the main Islamic organisations in Uzbekistan, such as the IMU and HT. Walker, when discussing these organisations, does not make a clear distinction between them, and how each one's methods and tactics differ immensely. Walker gives a good analysis of the Tajik civil war, and the role that Islam played throughout it. He argues that the limited support of the IRP by the Tajik population (after the end of the civil war) is seen by the amount of votes it received in the 2000 parliamentary elections. It has frequently been argued that the low percentage of votes received in support of the IRP had not been a result of their diminishing popularity but a result of the growing authoritarianism of the Rahmonov regime, and its control over the voting system. Generally Walker needs to dig deeper into the characters, methods and objectives of the different Islamic organisations and why they are increasing in popularity.

Part two of the journal looks at Russian, Iranian and American foreign policy towards Central Asia. Dmitri Trenin has a different point of view concerning Russia's relationship with the USA in regards to Central Asia; he argues that the Central Asian

region will become an area of cooperation.³⁰ This thesis argues the opposite; there is a common goal to defeat Islamic extremism but the tactics of Moscow and Washington are very much different, as is each power's understanding of 'an Islamic threat'. In addition, the struggle against Islamic extremism is only part of the reason why Washington is so keen on promoting its presence in the region. The other aims of Washington, such as promoting its political, economic, cultural and other security-related influences come head to head with Russia's domestic and foreign ties with the Central Asian countries. The article on American involvement in the region highlights the dangers Washington could face in the future if it continues to woo the region's dictators.³¹ The final part deals with Afghanistan, and examines its role and impact on the region, and how it has affected the internal and external situation in the five Central Asian countries. A common weakness in the study of issues that affect contemporary Central Asia is the assumption that Russian and American interaction with the Central Asian countries is an issue of foreign policy alone. This attitude completely overlooks the domestic influence (mainly cultural and political) that the powers have over the region. As discussed previously in this introduction, this thesis looks at how foreign powers can have domestic effect.

One of the leading specialists on the region, Martha Brill Olcott, has written a range of literature of importance and value to all those interested in Central Asian affairs.³² Her latest book, Central Asia's Second Chance³³, is of particular interest as it covers most of the issues this thesis is concerned with and belongs to the second group of literature discussed in the introduction. Olcott argues that Central Asia's 'Second Chance' to reposition itself on the platform of change and reform came after September 11 and its new status as a region of strategic importance for the war on terror. Central Asia's first chance seems to have been missed with the growing wave of authoritarianism that swept the region soon after independence. She is very clear about how each country's

³⁰ Dmitri Trenin, 'Southern Watch: Russia's Policy in Central Asia', Journal of International Affairs, pp. 119-133

³¹ Ehsan Ahrari, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington', Journal of International Affairs, pp. 157-166

³² Two of Olcott's prominent books on the region are: Martha Brill Olcott, Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise, Washington, D.C, 2002 and The Kazakhs, Stanford, 1997

³³ Martha Brill Olcott, Central Asia's Second Chance, Washington, D.C, 2005

internal and external milieu is different to the others, and like this thesis, she dedicates separate sections to each of the five Central Asian countries throughout her book.

Olcott analyses Central Asia's (missed) 'Second Chance', which came as a result of the war on terror; ultimately a lot of emphasis is on America's role in the region. Olcott is often reluctant to use the word 'influence' and very much downplays any form of competition in Central Asia. Choosing to ignore or undermine clear signs of competition, specifically between Russia and the USA, does not allow for a full understanding of the internal and external politics of the region; this can be seen as one of the main weaknesses of this book. The most amount of reference she makes to any form of competition over the region between Moscow and Washington is in the field of petro-politics and pipeline routes. In this field she acknowledges that America has been increasing its interest in the resources the region has to offer, and argues that this is one of the main reasons Washington is so concerned with Central Asia.³⁴ She does not clearly compare economic, political, cultural and security-related interactions between Russia and Central Asia and America and Central Asia. She mentions Russia's role and America's role but does not measure them out vis-à-vis one another and how their influences affect the region. She discusses the decision by the USA to cut economic funding to Tashkent as a result of poor progress in reform, and continued abuse of human rights, but does not discuss how a few months after this incident (October 2004), Karimov invited Russia to join the Central Asian countries in the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO). This brought Russia closer to the economies of the Central Asian countries, and consequently gave it more scope for influence in the region. She also fails to clarify that GUUAM was very much seen as an American sponsored organisation, aimed at grouping all countries wanting to distance themselves from Russia. The decision of Karimov to leave the CST and join GUUAM in 1999 had been a clear sign that he was gearing his country towards the American sphere and away from the Russian one. Olcott over looks these types of comparisons and links, which ultimately downplay competition for influence in the region. She also places little emphasis and importance on Washington's relationship with Uzbekistan; instead she repeats that Uzbekistan was of no significant importance

³⁴ Olcott does make some remarks about competition in the security sphere, for example she says that US oil companies 'were pleased by the increased US security presence', pp. 175

to American interests. She says that Washington was not comfortable with being associated to a country with poor human rights record. Olcott appears too defensive of American foreign policy as Washington has numerous allies and friends with extremely poor human rights records.

Olcott argues that because the Russian state is relatively weak, its capacity to increase its national interests in the region is in doubt. This thesis argues that because Russia has lost most of its former influence globally; its motivation not to lose Central Asia to any power, especially its cold war foe, has increased. Olcott supports her argument by stating that Russia's invitation to join the CACO will not reinvigorate the organisation. This, however, is not the point. Russia by being allowed to join what had previously been an exclusively Central Asia organisation means that Russia's domestic and external influences on Central Asia have been boosted. Olcott's analysis of events is at times too narrow, and does not give enough scope for one type of influence to affect the others. This is what this thesis examines.

Olcott's lack of acknowledgement of certain events and policies, which emphasize the growth of competition between Russia and America over Central Asia, is not as overwhelming as her lack of emphasis on Islam. She definitely does not see Islam as being a competing influence. She briefly mentions some of the most prominent Islamic organisation, but fails to explain why such organisations have come to exist, how they have evolved, their similarities and differences, what their objectives are and most important why they are gradually become stronger and more popular. The American campaign in Afghanistan and the destruction of the IMU camps have only marginally reduced the threat of political Islam. She also fails to give a clear picture of how the regimes are helping to fuel Islamicisation.

Olcott undoubtedly offers an in depth look at Central Asian's internal and external politics. She offers a clear country-by-country analysis of the economic and political scene in each of the countries and their interaction with foreign countries. The main weakness is in the failure to compare the actions of external (and internal) forces towards similar policies affecting each of the Central Asian countries. Her language, in reference to the lack of Russian-American competitiveness in the region and under-

estimation of Islam, is similar to the kind of language used in the early 1990's, when competing influences in Central Asia were not as widely researched and analysed as they are today. Olcott has firmly stuck to official American foreign policy language that a great game scenario is not developing in the region, and that competing influences are exaggerated.

Like Olcott above, John Anderson in 'The International Politics of Central Asia'³⁵, approaches internal and external factors and influences that affect the region in one single authored volume. In many aspects this thesis is built up on items of literature such as Anderson's, which tackle the dynamics of the region as a whole, and are thus able to create continuity in the issues they analyse. From the very first page of the introduction, Anderson talks about the 'great game' in the nineteenth century and the unfolding 'new great game' in the post-Soviet era. He mentions various forces, which this thesis calls powers, that struggle to influence political, economic and ideological matters in the region. Unlike Olcott, Anderson appears to believe that the region is being subjected to competing influences resulting in a new great game scenario. What is interesting is that Anderson wrote this book in 1997, before it became widely discussed whether or not the region was re-living a new great game.

The first three chapters of this book are not of great concern to this thesis as they look at the pre-independence period. Chapter four looks at the internal politics of each of the five countries. Anderson discusses the president-centered political systems, and places Niyazov and Karimov as the most authoritarian leaders from the start of the independence period. The first chapter in this thesis looks at most of the issues looked at in this chapter by Anderson, including the role of civil and political society in the region and the growth of authoritarianism. While Anderson stops in 1997, this thesis provides a continuation and discusses similar issues post-1997 and into the era of the war on terror.

The next chapter tackles the issue of laying down an economic base for the newly independent states, this chapter also looks at natural resources and the economic

³⁵ John Anderson, The International Politics of Central Asia, New York, 1997

strength this can bring some of the countries in the region. Anderson's following chapter on the search for identity, nation building and especially the Islamic factor, was very beneficial and interesting to this thesis. Anderson clearly points out the lack of enthusiasm on placing too much importance on Islam as a result of the Soviet-educated and secular elites, although he acknowledges the cultural and social importance Islam has on the lives of many Central Asians. The language and tone Anderson uses when discussing the role of Islam in Central Asia is mild, and does not portray Islam as a growing threat to the stability of the region. This could be because Islam from independence to 1997 was not seen in the same light as it is today, although the Taliban had already caused fear and concern for their neighbours. This was also the time when the secular elites were not as paranoid about the spread of Islam amongst their population. The 1999 Tashkent bombings and the Batken incursions had not yet planted the fear that still lives today amongst the ruling elites, and particularly for Karimov. This thesis provides an update to the volatile situation that Anderson has touched upon in this chapter. Hence Anderson talks about a mild Islamic influence, very different to the way Ahmad Rashid refers to Islam in the region leading up to the war on terror and afterwards. Anderson focuses more on secular Islam than political Islam, and highlights the role of religion on everyday life.

Anderson links his last chapter to the starting point of his book, which looks at the region's relationship with external powers, and the prospect of a new great game unfolding. He argues that political and economic developments after independence bore many similarities to the great game of the nineteenth century. He states that Turkey, backed by America, was one of the potential key players against the growing role of Islam, backed by Iran. Anderson then dedicates different sections of the chapter to countries and regions that can pull Central Asian towards their sphere. Russia's continued role in the region is covered in this chapter. In other words, he examines the potential competing influences over the region. This thesis places Russia as a competing power for influence along-side America and Islam. As the years progressed it became clearer that Turkey and Iran could not evolve as leading powers in the region, instead the powers that Anderson argues backed Turkey and Iran appeared to have usurped that role.

The remaining items of literature mainly do not aim to compare competing influences, nor analyse the internal and external influences and dynamics of Central Asia as a whole. Many of the items mentioned below are particularly good for specific chapters in this thesis.

Yaacov Ro'i³⁶ edits an essential volume of great value to all academics whose work concentrates on the internal politics of Central Asia. It provides a contribution to the study of the evolution of democracy in the region. The chapters cover a wide range of issues which help determine why the Central Asian successor states have not achieved the levels of democratisation and pluralism seen in most non-Islamic former Soviet Republics.³⁷

Richard Pomfret's³⁸ work is of importance to the study of the internal politics of the region.³⁹ He analyses the impact of western economic influences on economic and political developments in the region. The chapter's weaknesses are related to its narrow definition of western economic support. It primarily looks at aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Although both these institutions are very much under the supervision of America, a clearer understanding of western economic support is useful. This thesis offers this detail, it looks at purely American economic influences on Central Asia, consequently offering an insight on how American economic influences affect political trends in the successor states and hence the approach taken towards democratisation. Pomfret's work can, therefore, appear to be missing a bulk of the puzzle, which shows the extent to which western

³⁶ Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism In Muslim Eurasia (hereafter Democracy and Pluralism), London, New York, 2001

³⁷ For a detailed and clear accounts of the criteria which constitutes a democratic system and how democracy can be consolidated look at: Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, Baltimore, London, 1996

³⁸ Richard Pomfret, 'Aid and Ideas: The Impact of Western Economic Support on Muslim Successor States' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism, pp. 77-95

³⁹ Michael Mandelbaum's volume is of interest in this field, especially in what it does not include rather than in what it does. Written in 1994, it has a wide range of chapters, none of which look at the relationship between Islam and the people of the region or between America and Central Asia, this is quite characteristic of literature written in the first half of the 1990's. Martha Brill Olcott's chapter is relevant to look at when researching the internal politics of the region. For further reading look at: Martha Brill Olcott, 'Ceremony of Substance: The Illusion of Unity in Central Asia' in Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan (hereafter Central Asia and the World), New York, 1994, pp. 17-46

economic assistance can affect the internal milieu in the region. This chapter briefly mentions the special relationship between Uzbekistan and American without providing a full picture of the consequences of America's involvement. The author talks about Russia's power in the region waning after 1995; in fact the opposite can be argued. Russia did not attempt to regain its lost influences in the region until the late Kozyrev period. By 1995, Russia had re-orientated its attention to Central Asia, and had already become involved in the Tajik civil war, which it helped to end. In general Pomfret's chapter could benefit from a more analytical approach toward how the specific western countries and international institutions have influenced economic and political developments in Central Asia.

Vladimir Babak's⁴⁰ work also fits in with the analysis of the internal politics of the Central Asian countries; it looks at the formation of political parties and movements. The topic of political parties and movements encompasses some issues that also relate to the chapter on Islamic influences in Central Asia. Babak writes an account detailing all internal organisations, parties and movements in all five Central Asian countries since independence. The weakness of this chapter lies in the references made to Islamic political parties and organisations. The author groups all Islamic parties, movements and organisations together, insinuating that they all have a similar agenda and common tactics. Islamic parties in Central Asia are diverse in nature, character and methods. There is only a brief mention of HT, one of the most influential and widespread Islamic groups in the region. The personality and methods of this group are pivotal to those that have an interest in Islam and Islamic parties in the region.

Leonid Levitin's⁴¹ chapter is concerned with the successes and failures of liberalization and democratisation in Kyrgyzstan. It also has some aspects that are of relevance to the chapter dealing with Islam in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan stands out as a unique case in regards to the internal politics of Central Asia, and has consequently been a topic of steamy debate amongst academics. Levitin writes an impressive account of how and why Kyrgyzstan surfaced as an 'island of democracy', and why

⁴⁰ Vladimir Babak, 'The Formation of Political Parties and Movements in Central Asia' in Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism, pp. 143-162

⁴¹ Leonid Levitin, 'An Island of Democracy' in Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism, pp. 187-211

this island is starting to look less democratic. Like Babak there is a general underestimation of Islamic influences in the region. He gives Islam a more important role than Babak, and says that Islam's position in Kyrgyzstan is vital; he refers to Islam as a factor and not an influence. This thesis fills the void in regards to the power of Islam in the region and the motives, agendas and differences between different Islamic parties and movements. Levitin also appears to overestimate Kyrgyzstan's democratic nature, as by the time he wrote this chapter (2001), Kyrgyzstan could no longer boast of being 'an island of democracy'. John Anderson has dedicated work particularly on Kyrgyzstan, which is of profound benefit to all those interested in the domestic political scene of that country and in the elements of democratisation, which helped Kyrgyzstan be viewed as the political exception to other Central Asian countries.⁴² Anderson clearly points out the reformist characteristics of the early years of the Akayev regime. Regardless of Akayev's reformist attitude, Kyrgyzstan has never resembled a western model of government and has consistently been closer to the Soviet model. Most of the individuals in power had also been prominent during the Soviet period, and were thus mentally and politically Russified. Some of the most prominent people in government, such as Felix Kulov, were only fluent in Russian. Ironically Kulov, now Prime Minister in Bakiyev's government, is still only fluent in Russian. Anderson points out that Akayev clearly saw the benefits from balancing his foreign relations; maintaining good relations with Russia was important as was searching for foreign partners to help economically rebuild his country. Anderson makes it clear that Bishkek consistently oriented itself towards Russia, and this thesis identifies two of the most compelling and long lived influences which align these two countries together: cultural and political influences.⁴³

Lena Jonson writes a remarkable book on the relationship between Russia and Central Asia⁴⁴, which should be on the reading list of all who are interested in Russian influences in Central Asia. She covers a wide range of issues, which she analyses and justifies sufficiently, but there are some areas this book has not thoroughly covered.

⁴² For further analysis of civil society in Kyrgyzstan look at: John Anderson, 'Creating a Framework for Civil Society in Kyrgyzstan', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2000, pp. 77-93

⁴³ John Anderson, *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy*, Amsterdam, 1999

⁴⁴ Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy*, London, New York, 2004

Jonson argues that throughout the 1990's, the Central Asian countries oriented their foreign policy away from Russia. This seems certainly true for Uzbekistan, but not for the other four countries. Turkmenistan's declared status of permanent neutrality cannot be seen as an attempt to move away from the Russian fold. Regardless of Turkmenistan's status, the Turkmenbashi showed profound flexibility towards his country's language laws and was not hesitant in declaring Russian a state language alongside Turkmen. His dual citizenship law also seemed extremely accommodating towards the ethnic Russians in Turkmenistan, and further showed that regardless of Niyazov's ambitions for isolationism and lack of interest in politicised organisations, Moscow remained his main channel for outside cooperation, especially in regards to gas exports. Niyazov's orientation towards the Taliban and American oil ventures (Trans-Afghan-Pipeline) was not so much a symbol of Niyazov's ambitions to orientate his foreign policy away from Russia, but an opportunity for Turkmenistan to diversify its resource networks and improve the economic situation of Turkmenistan and the Turkmenbashi. Unlike Karimov joining GUUAM and leaving the CST, the aim was not to move away from the Russian sphere but to attract foreign investment. Therefore, Turkmenistan cannot be seen, as argued by Jonson, to have re-oriented its foreign policy away from Russia.

Jonson also argues that both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were bent on diversification. Tajikistan was in no position to do so, especially after the contributions made by the Russia's 201st MRD throughout the civil war. Jonson acknowledges this point but generally argues that Tajikistan, being the only Persian-speaking country and having close ties with Afghanistan, was prone to move away from Russia. Tajikistan still remains one of the most pro-Russian successor states in the former Soviet sphere, and its Persian language and ethnic kinfolk in Afghanistan do not appear to have influenced Russian-Tajik relations. As for Kyrgyzstan, its problems with Islamic extremism and concern over hegemonic neighbours have further encouraged it to stay under the Russian fold. Jonson talks about Russia's influences in Central Asia but overlooks one of the most essential influences that has guaranteed Central Asian loyalty, that is the effects of Russification, particularly behavioral Russification on the Central Asian population. Jonson does not clearly explain how Kazakhstan re-orientated its foreign policy away from Russia. It has often appeared that Nazarbayev

saw the creation of the CIS as a tool to guarantee Russian involvement in Central Asia. This thesis argues that although Russian influences were challenged throughout the 1990's, since September 11 its role in the region is coming more and more under challenge.

The late Oumirserik Kasenov writes about security-related influences in Central Asia, although his main emphasis appears to be on Kazakhstan. He does not use the definition 'security-related influences' but analyses the role of different actors on Central Asian security. He places emphasis and importance on Russia being the greater security provider than any other country. His work has some limitations to it; he does not discuss the role and aims of the Collective Security Treaty or the Shanghai Five, which are essential when discussing security in Central Asia. He does, however, mention Russia's concern with the emergence of a rival power in the region (America) and its desire to remain the most influential power over Central Asia. This shows how the role of the USA had always been of concern to Russia, especially by the 1990's, when America's economic interests (energy resources) in the region had become relatively prominent.⁴⁵

As with most of Ahmed Rashid's contributions, their strength outweighs their weakness, and Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia is not an exception.⁴⁶ Rashid looks thoroughly at the internal and external reasons, which give birth to political Islam and extremism. This book not only gives a clear analysis of the main Islamic organisations and movements in the region, but also discusses the relationship between the Central Asian governments and these organisations. Rashid's main argument revolves around the issue of Islam becoming more important and prominent in Central Asia and dedicates this book to the rise of Islamic extremism, therefore predominantly looking at Islam's political influence on the region, which this thesis is also concerned with. He looks at the history of Islam, and how it has gradually evolved with the people of Central Asia, therefore also looking at Islam's cultural influence. Where his work is weakest is in the area of secular Islamicisation. The result of

⁴⁵ Oumirserik Kasenov, 'Central Asia: National, Regional and Global Aspects of Security' in Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth (eds.), Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia, London, 1998, pp. 188-205

⁴⁶ Ahmed Rashid, Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia (hereafter Jihad), London, 2003

Washington's political influences in Central Asia is often seen as supportive towards the authoritarian leaderships and a far cry from notions of democratisation. This thesis argues that this has helped created a rise in secular Islamicisation, which is when the secular population becomes more inclined to and less critical of Islamic behavior. Therefore, although this book is strong in its analysis of Islamic extremism, it is weak in its analysis of secular Islam. Rashid does not look at Islam in terms of influences, and although he makes clear the destabilising effect Islam has had on the region, he does not refer to it as a competing power head to head with America and Russia over influence in Central Asia. Therefore, Rashid's work is a contribution to the study of political Islam, and not to the analysis of competing influences.

Rashid's analysis of Islamic influences in the region is of profound use, Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords also contributes to understanding the link between Afghanistan's Taliban regime and Islam in Central Asia.⁴⁷ This thesis shows how Islamic influences coming from Afghanistan helped make Islam an external power. Islam is predominantly thought of as an internal influence, but when the Taliban had an impact on the Islamic evolution of Central Asian movements, then Islam became an external force as well. This is a point that Rashid does not make. The bonds between external and internal influences and their interaction are specific to this thesis.

Since the early years of independence, Washington's relationship with Tashkent has appeared different to its relationship with the other Central Asian countries. Over the years there has been a wide range of literature regarding the relationship between these two countries. Shahram Akbarzadeh⁴⁸ offers an in-depth analysis of the evolution of this 'special' friendship in one book. America's role in Central Asia has become an integral part of the study of the region. This cannot be fully done without emphasis on the Karimov regime, and its role in aiding America's position in the region.

Akbarzadeh gives a good account of Uzbekistan's internal imbroglio after independence and the Islamic challenges the Karimov regime was faced with. In his

⁴⁷ Ahmed Rashid, Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords (hereafter Taliban), 2001

⁴⁸ Shahram Akbarzadeh, Uzbekistan and the United States: Authoritarianism, Islamism and Washington's Security Agenda, London, New York, 2005

chapter concerning Uzbekistan's Islamic challenge, Akbarzadeh makes a profound point when he argues that the IRP of Uzbekistan, which came to existence in 1991 and ceased to exist by 1992, were not driven by the notion or belief in the creation of an 'Umma', and were not really interested in the greater Islamic word. This is a point, which this thesis takes further; it argues that all of the Islamic movements and organisations in Central Asia are primarily concerned with regional Islam. The IRP, IMU and HT (in Central Asia), became prominent as a result of the domestic pressures imposed on the population. They seek to find a regional solution; they do not function in accordance with other Islamic organisations outside Central Asia. They are not like Al-Qaida, with a global agenda; they are regional phenomena resulting from regional issues, and working towards regional control and influence. Even HT, which is not a homegrown organisation, has a regional agenda; it may have sympathy with its sister organisations in the Middle East, but does not function with them nor have similar objectives.

Akbarzadeh does not place enough emphasis on the reasons behind the growth of Islamic organisations and Islamic sentiment. He does not approach what this thesis argues are the reasons behind the rising Islamic force, such as economic, social, and political injustices. Akbarzadeh's main emphasis is on the evolution of the relationship between Tashkent and Washington. He argues that since the early years of independence Uzbekistan has tried to find an alternative to counterweigh Russia's role in the region.⁴⁹ This was not easy for Karimov to achieve at the beginning, especially as the Clinton administration and the State Department were vocal in their disappointment with the lack of democratic elements in the country. The reaction of the Pentagon was unsurprisingly positive towards Karimov; it had the United States national security interests in mind.

Akbarzadeh analyses the intensification of American influences over Uzbekistan and its avoidance to criticise the Karimov regime. He fails to make three points, which this thesis deems as essential. Firstly he does not examine the effect Washington's support of the Karimov regime had on the other Central Asian countries. He ignores their

⁴⁹ For further reading on Uzbek domestic policy and Uzbekistan's relationship with its neighbours and Russia look at: Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy*, London, 1998

further re-orientation towards Russia fearing the increasing hegemonic attitude of Uzbekistan with US backing. Secondly, he hardly makes any references to the relationship between Russia and Washington as a result of the latter's increased involvement with Uzbekistan, consequently downplaying the competition for influence between these two powers. He mentions Russia's reaction to some of Washington's security influences, such as the creation of military bases on Central Asian soil, but does not analyse the parallel security structures that the region was torn between. Lastly, he does not look at the Islamicising results American influences in Uzbekistan were creating. He either does not believe America's tolerance of Karimov's abuses towards his population were creating an Islamic backlash or simply fails to mention it. This was most clearly seen with the bombings of the American and Israeli embassies in Tashkent in 2004.

Akbarzadeh generally writes a well-structured book on Uzbekistan's politics and foreign policy. The omission of the points mentioned above create some weaknesses, in addition events resulting from the incident in Andijan in May 2005, have changed the relationship dramatically between Uzbekistan and America.

As already stated, the literature on contemporary Central Asia is extensive. The literature available fits in different categories. One group of books attempts to compare influences or at least lays out the powers involved in the whirlpool of competition, which has become known as the 'new great game'. This set of literature has a disadvantage of not being able to sufficiently compare the strengths and weaknesses of the influences these powers have over every single Central Asian country. As the chapters are multi-authored and not linked, they fail to create a continuity in the general argument of how each power has become more appealing or prominent (compared to the others) in each country. The second set of books is the most similar to this thesis. Only a few items of literature have approached how internal and external influences from different powers have affected the orientation of the region as a whole. This thesis also places emphasis on Islam as a competing power on par with Russia and America, which is often not as thoroughly examined. The third group of works looks at more specific issues concerned with Central Asia, for example, democratisation in the region or Uzbek-American relations. They do not offer an

analysis of Central Asian politics or foreign policy, but are only concerned with a specific aspect of either. This thesis has also contributed to this area as it has offered research on specifics that have previously created a void in the academic literature, such as the impact of American cultural influence on Central Asian society, or the effects of behavioral Russification on the political orientations of a country.

1.5 Methodology

Research for this thesis was done by reading primary and secondary literature on issues related to my research question. Speaking to Central Asian, Russian and Chinese diplomats outside Central Asia also helped with my research. Two visits were made to Central Asia in September 2004 and November 2005; the countries visited were Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The reasons to visit these three countries will be explained below. One of the most important ways of gathering information, while in Central Asia, was to approach academics, politicians, officials, Imams, and economists, and conduct a series of interviews. In addition speaking to students, and asking about their views on certain issues such as religion, Russification or globalisation was very beneficial for understanding how the young educated strata of the population perceived contemporary issues, which affected their lives and future. Students from Bishkek who participated in the Tulip revolution were particularly informative as they played a direct role in the political development of the country. Speaking to members of civil youth movements and other local organisations was also very informative as was speaking to ordinary citizens distanced from the world of politics. Visiting mosques and madrassas in the region also allowed me to see how Islam can be so differently and similarly perceived in different Muslim countries. Material was also gathered from items of literature (articles, leaflets, books and speeches) given to me from people interviewed in Central Asia on specific issues related to my thesis, which were not found or difficult to find outside the region. Newspapers from the region were also used, as were various Internet sites.

Cultural influences on all strata of Central Asian society, such as linguistic and behavioral Russification, secular Islam and the presence of American culture, have been very badly researched in the past. Research in specifically this sphere can primarily develop from analytical observation. This means that research was not only conducted in terms of what was read and who was interviewed but also according to what was seen and observed. This meant that certain characteristics (which are covered in detail in the chapters that cover cultural influence) that indicate the powers'

competing cultural influences was continuously looked for and compared with other areas of the same country and other countries in the region.

There were undeniably many limitations in conducting the kind of research mentioned above, especially in regards to access to institutions and individuals, language barriers and openness during interviews. Turkmenistan seemed difficult to conduct interviews in and acquire views that may have criticised or disagreed with the official government line. In addition, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the least linguistically Russified, hence some knowledge of the titular language may have been necessary. For this reason it was decided to visit only Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is important to point out that access to institutions and conducting interviews in the three countries visited was not always a straightforward task. Often I had to persuade people to talk and explain in detail the reasons behind my questions. Openness in regards to certain issues, such as politics and religion had limitations even in the commonly perceived 'more liberal' countries of the region.

Access to information and individuals was by far the easiest in Kyrgyzstan. People, especially after but also before the Tulip revolution, were more willing to speak about the political, economic, security-related and religious state of affairs in the country. Often during interviews, however, there would be a third person taking notes of the questions asked and the answers given. In Kyrgyzstan, the topic individuals were the least open about was the extent of Islamicisation. Many Kyrgyz would argue that their country has no Islamic extremism and preferred to downplay activities in the Ferghana Valley and the growing role of Islamic organisations in the south of the country. These comments would often frustrate the Uzbeks, who would accuse the Kyrgyz of badly tackling the rise of extremism in their country.

Where as in Kyrgyzstan people were more inclined to openly criticise the regime both before and after the revolution, in Kazakhstan people preferred not to talk about the internal political situation. Academic faculties were difficult to gain access to, and at times I felt I was the one being interviewed. Both in the Islamic University in Almaty and in various mosques and madrassas in Uzbekistan, some knowledge of Arabic helped ease initial tension concerning politics and Islam and further persuaded

religious teachers and Imams to speak to me. Access to politicians, economists and academics was difficult in Tashkent and almost all interviews conducted were arranged weeks in advance. Many of my contacts in Tashkent were made with the help of the Uzbek Embassy in London. Access to diplomats at the embassy was extremely difficult as most of them were concerned about the kind of questions I would ask them and the kind of question I would ask in Tashkent. This was a clear reflection of the lack of openness and xenophobia present in Uzbekistan. It was also important in Uzbekistan to tone down some of the questions asked, as it was a concern of mine not to appear in any way critical of the regime and its policies. In general what helped ease some of the limitations inevitably to be found, was to make at least one strong contact in each of the countries visited, who would often help in gaining access to other individuals in the field.

1.6 Outline of Chapters

This thesis will be composed of seven chapters including the introduction and the conclusion. The second chapter deals with the internal politics of each of the Central Asian countries. The first section of this chapter looks at the Central Asian countries' reaction to perestroika and the disintegration of the USSR. As this chapter is concerned with democratisation, the second section is on democratisation theory, and the third section examines the reasons behind the failure of democratisation in Central Asia. It would be impossible to dedicate a thesis to competing influences in Central Asia without having an insight into the internal life of the region. After all it is the internal climate of each Central Asian country that enables certain influences by different powers to have a strong presence.

The third chapter looks at Russian influences in Central Asia. The first section looks at Russia's historic legacy over the region. Although Russia's interaction with Central Asia during the Tsarist and Soviet periods has been the focus of numerous literatures, it is important to stress that Moscow's military expansion was not regarded with the same amount of hostility as in other regions incorporated into the Russian sphere. This has been one of the reasons why perestroika and the disintegration of the USSR were not received with the same amount of enthusiasm seen elsewhere.

The following six sections of the chapter deal with Russian influences over Central Asian since 1991. The second section traces the patterns of Russian foreign policy towards Central Asia since independence, and highlights the importance of Central Asia to Russian foreign policy today. The third section looks at Russia's political influence over Central Asia and the growing similarities between the Russian and Central Asian political systems and how this enables Russia to maintain strong political influence over the regimes. The fear of coloured or Islamic revolutions in the region has made Russia's political support even more valuable. The fourth section is dedicated to the cultural influences Russia has on each of the five countries. This is an area of Russian influences previously not researched thoroughly. It is primarily

concerned with the impact of linguistic and behavioral Russification, and how these two strands of Russification are essential in helping to place Central Asia under the Russian fold. This section also makes distinctions between Russification and Sovietization.

The following two sections look at the issue of security in Russian-Central Asian relations. The first section concerned with security examines the importance of Russia in guaranteeing security for the Central Asian countries. It focuses on Russia's task as security provider, primarily against the threat of Islamic extremism through Russian-sponsored anti-terrorist centers and organisations such as the CST, the CSTO and the SCO, which is led by China as well as Russia. It highlights Central Asia's need for the creation of such organisations as a guarantee that Russia will not leave them to deal with destabilising forces by themselves, especially as they have proved unable to create effective purely Central Asian security structures. Russia, through such organisations, also functions as a protector of weaker countries against more powerful neighbours. Russia's stabilising role throughout the Tajik civil war is looked at in this section. This section also highlights how not only the threat from Islamic extremism has pushed Central Asian closer to Russia, but also on how the war on terror, and the increasing American involvement in the region, particularly with Uzbekistan, has pushed some countries further into the arms of Russia out of fear that American-backed Karimov might violate some of his neighbours' national integrity and sovereignty. This further exposes the creation of two competing security fields.

The second section of Russia's security influences focuses on the role Central Asia plays in the security of Russia. The main question asked here is: why is it essential for Russia's security and national interests to remain influential in Central Asia? This section aims to show the links between the security of both Russia and Central Asia. The threat and rise of Islamic extremism in Central Asia is an issue that poses a direct threat to the security of Russia. It is feared that if Islamic forces triumph in one Central Asian country then the rest would follow suit, consequently putting the whole region, including Russia, in a vulnerable situation. This section is, therefore, concerned with the links between Chechen separatists and Islamic extremism and organisations in Central Asia. It is a Russian security concern to avoid the formation of a joint regional

Islamic force encompassing Central Asia and Russia. This is how stability for Central Asia and Russia are very much part of the same equation.

This section also discusses the role of the ethnic Russians living in Central Asia, and Russia's pledge to guarantee their security and welfare. It also looks at the role Central Asia plays in providing for Russia an image of continued power. Russia's global status has been very much dwarfed by that of the USA, but it still has a regional power status, which it does not want to lose to Washington. Central Asia is one of the last bastions where Russian influences can still dominate and rival that of the USA. Washington's military presence in Central Asia has caused concern for Moscow; this consequently led to the creation of two Russian military bases, one in Bishkek the other near Dushanbe. The creation of two parallel security structures further reveals the underlying competition between Russia and the USA. This is seen as a method by which Russia is reiterating its security role in the region. The relationship between Russia and Iran is also covered in this section, as this has not only created further tension between Moscow and Washington, but also highlighted Washington and Moscow's differing concepts of Islamic threat. This section, therefore, also looks at conflicting understanding of 'threat' and different tactics of fighting Islamic extremism.

Russia's economic influence over Central Asia is the last section in this chapter. It aims to highlight Russia and Central Asia's reciprocal relationship in the economic arena, especially after Russia's disappointment with its economic developments with the west. This section will discuss Russia's increasing emphasis on regional economic cooperation and will pay particular attention to the CACO, and the decision made by the Central Asian leaders to invite Russia into this previously strictly Central Asian economic group, which later merged with the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc).

The following chapter is concerned with American influences in Central Asia. It not only aims to look at the effectiveness of the four different strands of influences America has on Central Asia, it also traces the seeds of competition between Washington and Moscow since the collapse of the USSR. This chapter follows a very

similar framework to the chapter concerned with Russian influences in Central Asia. The first section looks at the patterns of American foreign policy towards Central Asia since 1991. The second section is divided into two sub-sections, which look at America's security-related influences in Central Asia. The first sub-section is concerned with NATO's partnership for peace, Centrasbat and GUUAM. The second sub-section is concerned with the war on terror, and how it has very much strengthened America's security influence over the region. Washington's security influences are looked at for each of the five Central Asian countries. Washington's military role in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (up until the events in Andijan in May 2005, which led to the closing of Karshi-Khanabad military base) strengthened America's security-related influences not only over these two countries but also of the region; the creation of these bases and the implications and consequences behind them will be looked at thoroughly in this sub-section. In addition, America's attempts to reinstate its security influences (and other influences) and its regional reputation after its divorce with Uzbekistan in 2005 will be looked at.

The next section in this chapter looks at America's political influence over Central Asia. This section looks at America's rhetoric in support of reforms, which help create pluralistic, democratic systems that respect human rights and civil liberties. It looks at instances where American policies contradict this rhetoric. America's blind support of regimes such as the Karimov regime has very much undermined its credibility of promoting democracy and protecting human rights. Uzbek-American relations are looked at closely in this section, as is the reaction of the Uzbek population to what it perceives as American double standards, and how this could have been partially responsible for the wave of Islamicisation in Uzbekistan. American-Uzbek relations are looked at pre-and post-Andijan, as are America's political influences over the four other Central Asian countries.

America's economic influences over each Central Asian country follow. Economic influences in this chapter do not include the energy sphere and the world of petro-politics; these issues have been given a separate chapter. This sub-section is particularly important, as America has a successful economic relationship with the Central Asian countries, one that promotes its position as a competing power over the

region. This section also looks at how Washington's economic superpower status has helped it promote some of its other influences.

America's cultural influences in Central Asia create the last section of this chapter. Here the effects of American culture and globalisation are analysed. The popularity of American food, music, films and other elements of every-day life are looked at for each of the five Central Asian countries, as is American-sponsored education.

The fifth chapter is in many ways a continuation of American influences in Central Asia. It looks at the resource wars over Central Asia's most important assets. This thesis argues that energy is one of the most important reasons why the USA is so interested in maintaining strong influences over the region. The first section of this chapter deals with the competition between Russia and America over the resources and pipelines of Central Asia, and how Washington's tense relationship with the Arabic Gulf States has further intensified Washington's resolve to remain active in the Caspian region. Therefore, this chapter is predominantly concerned with Kazakh and Turkmen energy-related relationships with both Russia and America. There is one section in this chapter, which is divided into four sub-sections. The first sub-section explains the controversy over the status of the Caspian Sea. The second and third sub-sections look at competing influences over Kazakh and Turkmen energy resources respectively. The fourth sub-section looks at energy deals and projects between these two powers and the other three Central Asian countries. Therefore, this chapter highlights the intense competition between Russia and America over pipelines and energy deals with the Central Asian countries. Influence over the energy sector of the Central Asian countries is essential, as it is not only economically beneficial but also enables Russia and America to have more weight over the other branches of influence that this thesis is concerned with.

The sixth chapter looks at the Islamic influences over Central Asia. It gives definitions of what is meant by, extremist, fundamentalist, political and secular Islam and how much they overlap and differ. The layout of this chapter slightly differs to the chapters dealing with Russian and American influences, as the main strands of influence that Islam has are on culture and politics. The first section of this chapter looks at the

Islamic legacy in Central Asia. The next section in this chapter deals with Islam as a domestic religion and cultural phenomenon. It looks at secular Islam and its gradual rise in the region and the impact this has over the population and their identity. Central Asia's increasing Islamic awareness is one of the greatest challenges to Russia and the USA. The following section examines state sponsored Islam in each of the five countries. The section on political Islam and Islamic organisations follows; it provides analysis behind the evolution of extremism and the increasing support-base of some Islamic organisations. The final section of this chapter looks at external Islamic influences mainly coming from Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Finally the conclusion has three sections. The first section re-states that competition and not cooperation has prevailed between the powers involved in Central Asia, in particularly between Russia and America. The second section gives a summary of what was researched and concluded in each of the chapters; it is consequently divided into five sub-sections. The third section discusses which of the three powers this thesis regards as having the most influence and why.

2.0 The Internal Politics of Central Asia

As stated in the introduction, the focus of this thesis is on competing influences in Central Asia. The three powers competing for influence are Russia, Islam and America. This thesis is about the Central Asian choice of which influences they choose to align themselves with and why. The competition between these external and internal powers is researched from the point of view of the five countries and amongst different strata of the population. Having set these grounds it becomes essential to analyse the internal politics of these countries and the reasons behind the failure of democratisation, which is what this chapter is concerned with. There are three sections in this chapter; the first looks at the Central Asian attitude to perestroika and the disintegration of the USSR. As this chapter is concerned with the internal politics of the region since 1991, democratisation theories are covered in the second section. The third section sees how far each Central Asian country has travelled down democratic paths and why they have failed in achieving democracy.

2.1 Perestroika and the Disintegration of the USSR

Gregory Gleason gives a very accurate summary of the effects of perestroika on the region. He says, “Within the old USSR, Central Asia was the most unaffected area by Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms under perestroika. It was the area most resistant to democratic change”.⁵⁰

As the quote above suggests, Central Asia experienced perestroika and all the other reforms introduced during the Gorbachev era, with relative calmness and even disinterest. Being one of the poorest regions in the USSR and highly dependent on Moscow, Central Asia unsurprisingly lacked enthusiasm for independence. The five Central Asian Republics were creations of the Soviet era, and ultimately lacked the experience of self-governing and nation building.⁵¹ The prospect of facing the outside world by themselves, and losing the security and support of the Soviet system was a

⁵⁰ Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States, Discovering Independence* (hereafter *The Central Asian States*), Boulder, Colorado, Oxford, 1997, p. 38

⁵¹ Vladimir Mesamed, ‘Linguistic Policy and the Process of Democratisation on Uzbekistan’ in Ro’i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, p. 233

daunting task that the Central Asian leaderships were not prepared to face.⁵² Hence independence was accidental, and not achieved by structured ideas of a well-formed intelligentsia.

Nevertheless by 1989, Uzbekistan showed limited signs that it was acknowledging the tide of reforms and change sweeping across Eastern Europe and the USSR. A socio-political organisation called Birlik was the first of its kind to emerge in Tashkent. The main goal of this movement was for the recognition of Uzbek as the state language. Unfortunately for its members the government agreed to their demands, consequently leaving them with little to unite around.⁵³

Gorbachev's reforms also had a mild impact on Tajikistan. There were no radical demands for political independence as seen in other areas of the USSR. As with most of the other Central Asian countries, the main issue that surfaced as an aftermath to the regional changes, focused around the topic of the status of the titular language. One of the main nationality inspired parties to evolve during that period was called Rastokhez (Rebirth) and was made up mainly of the urbanized intelligentsia.⁵⁴ Although Tajikistan experienced a relatively peaceful perestroika, not all change went without an escalation of tension. This was more apparent near the end of the Gorbachev era when Tajik national sentiments became a more sensitive issue for the ethnic Tajiks. The most severe incident happened in February 1990 when demonstrators protested against the government following rumors that Armenian refugees were going to be given housing in Tajikistan. These events revealed a profound polarisation of Tajik society and gave an indication of events to come. What was happening in Tajikistan was the formation of an opposition.⁵⁵

Glasnost and perestroika came late to Kyrgyzstan. As with Uzbekistan, it was not until 1989 that some of the elements of change, which had occurred in other areas of the communist bloc, were showing signs in Kyrgyzstan. Social organisations began to

⁵² Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, p. 145

⁵³ Shirin Akiner, 'Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks' in Graham Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States* (hereafter *The Nationalities Question*), London, New York, 1996, p. 339

⁵⁴ John Anderson, *The International Politics of Central Asia*, p. 167

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 168

emerge and change brought with it some signs of violence and inter-ethnic tension, such as the violence that erupted in the Osh region in 1990 between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities. In May 1990 a social organisation was created called the 'Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan', which called for democratisation and economic reform.⁵⁶

The few national democratic movements that evolved in Kyrgyzstan were very different in character to the ones found elsewhere in the communist bloc; they had no dissident elements. In other words they did not really have the will or the desire to constitute an opposition. This is one of the reasons independence was so challenging and unwanted. There were no individuals offering a solid alternative to the status quo. The reforms of perestroika, however, did bring reform minded people to power, such as the president.

As a nomadic structured society, Turkmenistan was not profoundly affected by perestroika. Tribal restrictions and deep rooted historical and cultural traditions overcame the changes that perestroika introduced elsewhere. The low levels of social and economic development limited many embryonic movements.⁵⁷ As elsewhere in Central Asia, this phenomenon was often paralleled with the lack of an urbanized intelligentsia, which made reform even harder to achieve.

Perestroika in Kazakhstan followed a similar pattern to the other Central Asian countries, although the perestroika period revealed elements of national self-awareness. This was most clearly seen in December 1986, when demonstrations broke out as a result of Gennady Kolbin's (an ethnic Russian from Moscow) appointment as Kazakh First Party Secretary, replacing an ethnic Kazakh.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Nursultan Nazarbayev's Kazakhstan was very much opposed to the disintegration of the USSR and supportive of Gorbachev's Union plan. Unlike many other First Party Secretaries,

⁵⁶ John Anderson, 'Creating a Framework for Civil Society in Kyrgyzstan', *Europe-Asia Studies*, p. 79

⁵⁷ Annette Bohr, 'Turkmenistan and the Turkmen' in Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question*, p. 353

⁵⁸ Sally N. Cummings, *Kazakhstan: Power and the Elites*, London, New York, 2005, p. 21

he was eager for the survival of a transnational union, and aware of the difficulties some republics would experience as separate entities.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Martha Brill Olcott, 'Ceremony and Substance: The Illusion of Unity in Central Asia, in Mandelbaum (ed.), Central Asia and the World, p. 29

2.2 Democratisation Theory

This section offers an analysis of the fundamental aspects and arguments of different theories of democratisation. The chapter is concerned with the internal politics of Central Asia and the failure of democratisation; it is therefore essential to talk about the different levels of democratisation in all five countries, and the different political and economic transitions (or lack of) in the name of democratisation each country has taken since 1991. Before this can be done, it is first useful to discuss democratisation theories and democratic characteristics. This will help in the understanding of the fault lines behind democratisation in Central Asia.

Many scholars have offered their own definition to what they interpret as democracy. Barrington Moore gives a brief and clear description of democracy when he says: it is the long and incomplete struggle to do three things: to check arbitrary rulers, to replace arbitrary rulers with just and rational ones, and finally to obtain a share for the underlying population in the making of rules.⁶⁰ Samuel Huntington describes democracy as when powerful collective decision makers are selected fairly after a popular voting procedure has occurred in which all adults were eligible to vote. He consequently gives democratisation two branches-contestation and participation. Huntington is very clear on what he defines democratic and non-democratic. A system where part of the adult population is not allowed to vote he describes as undemocratic, he also defines undemocratic a system that places limitations on the participation of the opposition, or when votes are manipulated, or even worse when the main opposition is totally banned.⁶¹ With this definition, all the Central Asian countries are far from achieving the slightest elements of democracy. There are many weaknesses to all democratisation theories, such as those concerning political legitimacy of a group that does not fit the democratic stereotype. In addition, in some countries, such as in

⁶⁰ Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Middlesex, New York, 1966, p. 414

⁶¹ Samuel Huntington, The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century (hereafter The Third Wave) Norman, London, 1991, p. 7

the USA, criminals are deprived of their right to vote, while in Russia they are not. Does that make America less democratic than Russia?

Joseph A. Schumpeter has developed what is often called the Schumpeterian or electoralist definition regarding democracy. He challenges what he calls the classical theory of democracy. The classical theory argues that all individuals hold their own opinion, and that in a democracy they safeguard their views by choosing a representative who will implement their opinions in the best way he or she can. Consequently the selection of the representative is given a secondary place in relations to the democratic arrangement, which is to give power to the electorate in regards to deciding political issues. Schumpeter does not like this. He prefers to make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary in comparison to the election of the men who are to do the deciding. It is the competitive struggle to win the people's vote that is of prime importance to Schumpeter; his definition of democracy very much focuses on the pivotal role of free elections. He argues that the electoral method in competitive elections is available for communities of any size. In a democracy, the main function of voting is to produce a government, in other words deciding whom the leading voice or voices of the state will belong to.⁶²

Robert A. Dahl has his own views on democratisation. His concept of democracy does not give elections alone the same level of importance as Schumpeter; he regards other characteristics as equally essential. Dahl places a lot of emphasis on the role of the citizen in a state. He argues that there are three necessary conditions for a democracy to flourish, such as the ability for individuals to formulate their preferences, to portray their preferences to other citizens and the government by individual or collective action and to have their preferences weighed equally by the government without discrimination. He also argues that for these conditions to survive a system needs to exist that will allow for certain conditions such as the freedom to join organisations, the freedom to express oneself, voting, contested and fair elections and no censorship. These are the institutional guarantees that should be in a democracy.⁶³

⁶² Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, London, 1976, pp. 269-283

⁶³ Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (hereafter Polyarchy), New Haven, London, 1971

S.M. Lipset states that democracy in a complex society must be composed of political systems that offer systematic constitutional opportunities, which often involve a change of government officials. This allows for a large proportion of the population to play a role in and influence decisions related to the state by choosing contenders in a fair and competitive environment. Some goals behind this concept rely on other works such as those of Schumpeter. Lipset has three main components, which constitute a democratic system. The first one is a clear set of beliefs specifying the legitimacy of institutions, such as political parties and free press, the second is a group of political leaders in government, and the third is another group of political leaders competing to gain office. Lipset gives importance to two elements of society that have profound consequences on the stability of democracy. These two characteristics are economic development and legitimacy (the level at which institutions are valued and considered trustworthy). Lipset's emphasis on precisely these two notions makes his work different to Schumpeter and other scholars. He focuses and endorses the concept that economic development, most often than not, brings a society closer to democracy. An environment of poverty and oppression rarely induces democratic thinking and aspirations.⁶⁴ This offers an explanation why regions such as Central Asia are moving further and further away from democracy. In Ghassan Salame's edition- Democracy without Democrats?- Arab-Islamic exceptionalism is blamed for the lack of democracy⁶⁵, while Lipset offers another explanation. Tyrannical and oligarchic systems (that are not necessarily Islamic), with impoverished masses are prime cases where democracy appears to have no place. What often tends to happen in such cases (where the population is Islamic) is an upsurge in religious sentiment as a response to the status quo (this point is thoroughly covered in this thesis). Alfred Stepan and Graeme Robertson engage in an interesting debate, where they put forward their views as a result of their research, that Islamic exceptionalism, meaning the lack of democracy in Muslim countries, does not really exist. They argue that this commonly thought Islamic exceptionalism should in fact be called Arab exceptionalism. They

⁶⁴ S.M. Lipset, Political Man, London, 1963, pp. 45-50

⁶⁵ Ghassan Salame, 'Introduction: Where are the Democrats?', John Waterbury, 'Democracy without Democrats?: the Potential for Political Liberalisation in the Middle East' in Ghassan Salame (ed.), Democracy Without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World (hereafter Democracy Without Democrats?), London, New York, 1994, pp. 1-3, 8-17, 23-25

argue that Islamic countries can be and are democratic in many ways (they support this claim) and that the main problem lies within the Arab world.⁶⁶ Sanford Lakoff challenges Stepan and Robertson by arguing that Arab exceptionalism does not exist but that it is solely a question of Muslim exceptionalism, which also encompasses the Arab world.⁶⁷

Lipset makes another important point that although there exists a high correlation between industrialization, urbanization, wealth, education and democracy, the former does not always lead to the latter. Certain historical events play a role in the development or failure of democracy. Once established, a democracy tries to strengthen its institutions, which ultimately contribute towards its continued existence. Lipset's argument relating to the correlation between democracy and education is less convincing. Lipset argues that education is necessary for democracy but not that a high level of education will necessarily mean an easier transition to democracy. Central Asia is a good example of this. High levels of education and gender equality throughout the Soviet era do not appear to have placed the region in a particularly advantageous position.⁶⁸ In Whitehead's volume, Adam Przeworski also talks about micro-oriented paths towards democratisation. This theory, very much in tune to Lipset's, argues that democracy is a consequence of economic development and increased education.⁶⁹

Przeworski studies the transition process of an authoritarian state to a democratic one. He argues that there are four conditions that weaken an authoritarian state, and force it to reconsider its policies. These conditions may lead to liberalisation. The first condition is when the authoritarian state realises that its survival is no longer necessary or possible and collapses. The second condition is when the regime loses its legitimacy and collapses. The third reason is when there is a conflict within the ruling bloc. If this

⁶⁶ Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, 'Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 15, no. 4, October 2004, pp. 140-146

⁶⁷ For further reading on this issue: Sanford Lakoff, 'The Reality of Muslim Exceptionalism', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 15, no. 4, October 2004, pp. 133-139

⁶⁸ Lipset, *Political Man*, pp. 55-58

⁶⁹ Adam Przeworski, 'Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy', in Laurence Whitehead (ed.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (hereafter *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*), London, Baltimore, 1986, p. 47

conflict cannot be reconciled the regime collapses. The fourth condition is a result of foreign pressure to introduce democratisation.⁷⁰ The fourth condition had troubled Richard Sakwa⁷¹, Alexis De Tocqueville⁷² and Laurence Whitehead⁷³, who argue that democratisation has to come from within and suit the needs of the country involved and not come moulded in a foreign package. This is one of the reasons that despite numerous American-sponsored democratic organisations in Central Asia, democratisation is not proving to be as successful as they expected it to be.⁷⁴ One of the main reasons for the failure of democratisation has resulted from the lack of pressure from below, from the population, to democratize. This is mainly the result of the Central Asian countries having no experience in nationhood prior to their creation by the USSR in the 1920's. Their limited experience with nationalism has made them more acceptable to the authoritarianism of their leaderships. The ruling elites on the other hand are content with the failure of democratisation as this allows more political control. These points will be covered in more detail in the following section.

As we have seen above, there are certain pillars in the process of democratisation that have to be satisfied and completed before democracy can be described as consolidated. Most scholars concerned with democratisation theories will argue that there exist five conditions, which indicate that the process of democratisation has been a success. The first of these conditions is that a free and lively civil society is in function. A lot of emphasis is placed on the ability of self-organised groups, movements and individuals to flourish, articulate their values and advance their interests without feeling pressure from the state. This is greatly lacking in Central Asia; the Central Asians are in the process of rediscovering their national identity and still do not have a clear vision of how they would like their country to evolve. This has resulted in the failure of democratisation.

⁷⁰ *ibid.* p. 50

⁷¹ Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, London, New York, 2002, pp.463-465

⁷² Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, London, New York, 2003, p. 369

⁷³ Laurence Whitehead, 'International Aspects of Democratisation' in Whitehead (ed.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 3-14

⁷⁴ I was told this by an American working in Bishkek on a democracy-promoting project. This person did not want to be named in this thesis. Almaty, November 2005

Democratisation through civil society is becoming more and more the common tool to promote political and economic transitions. The main problem with this concept is that it applies to all countries regardless of differing political and cultural aspects. Democracy in the west is an outcome of a long and complex social phenomenon, not a sudden struggle carried out by organised groups.⁷⁵ Creating a civil society is a difficult job. A nation has to want and be prepared for this task; civil society and thus democratisation is not something that can be forced onto people, it has to be rooted.⁷⁶ This is why democratisation has failed and will continue to fail in Central Asia under the present regimes. Alexis De Tocqueville warns against democratic despotism, in the cases where democracy is forced from the top downwards. This is almost certainly not going to happen in any of the Central Asian countries unless there is a complete change in leadership and elites. It is in the regimes' favour not to democratize and thus maintain their authority. In addition, they have Russia's political support in doing so. Tocqueville stresses that he does not recommend all nations with a democratic agenda to imitate the laws and customs of the Anglo-American world. He argues that countries have different influences and histories, which should be taken into consideration. He says it would be a misfortune if freedom were to take the same shape everywhere.⁷⁷

A civil society seeking a stable route towards democratisation should involve all political actors; after all it is political legitimacy that is being groomed through the process of democratisation. The concept of civil society rests on this point: to create political actors. However, what happens when these political actors do not fit the definition of 'democratic' political actors by western standards (although they may have popular legitimacy)? What if their democratic characteristics are not what are usually considered as democratic? This issue is one of the most controversial in countries in the Middle East and becoming slowly more important in Central Asia.⁷⁸

A political society is the second prerequisite to the achievement of consolidated democracy. A civil society can bring down an authoritarian regime, but for a fully

⁷⁵ Ghassan Salame, 'Introduction: Where are the Democrats?' in Ghassan Salame (ed.), Democracy without Democrats, p.16

⁷⁶ Richard Sakwa, Russian Politics and Society, p. 464

⁷⁷ Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, p. 369

⁷⁸ Olivier Roy, 'Civil Society in Central Asia and the Greater Middle East' (hereafter 'Civil Society'), International Affairs, vol. 81, no. 5, October 2005, pp. 1101-1012

democratic transition, a political society is essential. Political parties, electoral rules, political leadership and interplay alliances are some of the components of a political society. Central Asia is far from achieving any of the above, especially as most Central Asian societies are still heavily based around clan and tribal structures.⁷⁹

The rule of law is the third condition, which has to be met before a democracy can truly be consolidated. It is often the rule of the individual and not the rule of law that separates the consolidated democracies from the rest.⁸⁰ The rule of law does not exist in Central Asia; it is the rule of the president that prevails. State bureaucracy compatible with a democratic government, such as the ability to command and regulate legitimately and an institutionalized economic society are the last two preconditions for a consolidated democracy. A free market is seen as a prerequisite for the evolution of democracy and the encouragement towards private ownership and entrepreneurship.⁸¹

These are the main concepts, which relate to democratisation. The next section will examine how each country approached democratisation and analyse the reasons behind the failure of democracy.

⁷⁹ Vladimir Khanin, 'Political Clans and Political Conflict in Contemporary Kyrgyzstan', in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia*, London, New York, 2004, pp. 215-228

⁸⁰ Richard Sakwa, *Postcommunism*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, 1999, p. 52

⁸¹ Roy, 'Civil Society', p. 1004

2.3 The Reversal and Failure of Democratisation in Central Asia

This section is concerned with the democratic developments of each Central Asian country and how each country took steps towards and away from democratisation. It also offers an analysis of why democratisation failed in the region.

One of the main reasons behind the failure of democratisation lay in the fact that all five Central Asian countries were products of the USSR. They had been created as national entities in the 1920's and developed a sense of nationhood during the Soviet era, one very much focused on the Russian language and culture. This is one of the main reasons why Russia's cultural influences are so strong today. This point will be covered thoroughly in the following chapter. National identities such as Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz were introduced into Central Asian political life soon after the creation of the USSR.⁸² The replacement of the Kazakh, Uzbek and other Central Asian languages with Russian and the introduction of the Cyrillic script resulted in the successful linguistic Russification of the entire region. This allowed the Central Asians to develop a shared identity based on language with one another and with Russia. Language became a pivotal point where the Central Asians experienced a sense of nationalism. It is generally believed that language is one of the most important components for nations and nationalism.⁸³

The strength of ethnic nationalism was more commonly seen in countries such as, Georgia and Armenia where these countries had previously existed as nations.⁸⁴ The extent of ethnic nationalism varied greatly from each Republic, according to Rakowska-Harmstone, the historic nationalities, such as in the Baltic States, Georgia and Armenia, very much preserved their national identity during the Soviet era. This added a great amount of strength to the success they experienced as independent

⁸² Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2003, p. 111

⁸³ *ibid.* p. 126

⁸⁴ Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, 'The Dialects of Nationalism in the USSR', in Rachel Denber (ed.), *The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context*, (hereafter *The Soviet Nationality Reader*) Boulder, Oxford, 1992, p. 392

countries, and to their adaptability to democratic reform.⁸⁵ This was certainly not the case for any of the Central Asian countries. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, modern day Central Asia had little concept of what nationalism was, and had no experience with national self-determination. The lack of nationalism has inevitably placed considerable strains on the success of any democratic process.⁸⁶ Consequently, the post Soviet era appears to have offered no or little pressure from below to fight and push for democratisation, as was more prominent in the Baltic and other countries with a long history of nationhood and hence a stronger sense of national identity.

During the Soviet period, there had never been any prominent nationalist movement challenging the authority of Moscow. Therefore, the lack of a nationalist intelligentsia after independence appears to have killed the process of democratisation almost as soon as it had started. The lack of a nationalist intelligentsia was evident in three broad areas. Firstly, other than the 1986 protests in Almaty, triggered by the appointment of an ethnic Russian, Gennadii Kolbin as first secretary of the Communist Party⁸⁷ of Kazakhstan, there appeared to be very few indications that broader political autonomy was a relevant issue for the Central Asian countries. Secondly, Central Asia never demanded more economic authority (in fact the opposite scenario existed as will be explained below). Thirdly, there never appeared to be any pressure from within Central Asia to promote local national culture.⁸⁸ National culture appears to have greatly been influenced by Russian culture and in some areas also by Islamic culture. This is what makes some Central Asians susceptible to Russian and Islamic influences.

The lack of a national identity was not the only factor that aided in the failure of democratisation; economic factors also played a role. The demand for democratisation in Central Asia was also not as high as in the more economically advanced former Soviet Republics. The economic benefits that both the population and the elites

⁸⁵ *ibid.* p. 405

⁸⁶ Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, Oxford, 1997, pp. 256-7

⁸⁷ Ingvar Svanberg, 'Kazakhstan and the Kazakhs', in Graham Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States* (hereafter *The Nationalities Question*), London, New York, 1996, p. 321

⁸⁸ Rakowska-Harmstone, 'The Dialects of Nationalism in the USSR', in Denber (ed.), *The Soviet Nationality Reader*, pp. 400-401

received from Moscow⁸⁹ played a role in diminishing their enthusiasm to break away from the Russian fold and implement real change in the form of democratisation. Central Asian societies (when they existed) were often very much agrarian based. As a result most people were more concerned with subsistence living than politics.⁹⁰ These are some of the reasons that make Central Asia more susceptible to Russian influences than to the other two powers this thesis is concerned with.

The Sovietised ruling elites also played a vital role in the lack of democratisation; they did not see themselves exploited by the USSR and reluctantly followed Gorbachev's reforms.⁹¹ After the end of totalitarian rule, it was also in their favour not to democratize as this helped them maintain their power base, which resulted in the growth of authoritarianism. The Soviet styled ruling systems coupled with a population that lacks distinct notions of national identity and all concepts of a civil and political society, while also having an attitude not to challenge those above them in power, resulted in, as some scholars have called it, a form of post-Soviet nationalism evolving. This translated into an unconscious or unavoidable continuation of Soviet habits in the post independence period.⁹² This helps explain why democratisation will continue to fail in Central Asia so long as the Soviet era elites maintain power and gradually increase their authority over all aspect of civil life. The population needs to equally accelerate their national rediscovery and carve out an identity that allows them to dislocate themselves from their past.

The growth of authoritarianism has not threatened the regime's relationship with Russia, if anything it has strengthened it. Russian political influences in Central Asia have increased with Moscow's accommodating and supportive attitude towards the leaders in the face of internal turmoil and international criticism. The Andijan events in 2005 (this will be covered in more detail in the section on Uzbekistan) were the perfect

⁸⁹ Gertrude E. Schroeder, 'Nationalities and the Soviet Economy', in Denber (ed.), The Soviet Nationality Reader, pp. 264-265

⁹⁰ Roger D. Kangas, 'State Building and Civil Society in Central Asia', in Vladimir Tismaneanu (ed.), Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia (hereafter Political Culture), Armonk, London, 1995, p. 273

⁹¹ Brown, The Gorbachev Factor, p. 253

⁹² Berg G. Frager, 'Soviet Nationalism: An Ideological Legacy to the Independent Republics of Central Asia', in Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World, London, New York, 2001, p13

example for this. While Karimov's relationship improved with Russia after Andijan, it worsened with America and further ignited and revealed Islam's influence over areas of the Ferghana Valley. Political power in Central Asia has slowly resembled political power under the Soviet political model, ultimately making the political systems of the region more susceptible to Russian political influence. Thus a situation developed where democratisation was being undermined from the ruling elites and a large bulk of the population. In addition, Russia's strong cultural influence (as will be discussed in the following chapter) facilitated in the growing role of Russia's political influence in the region. The failure of democratisation was therefore an advantage to Russia's competing influences. These issues will be further analysed below.

One of the main characteristics that all the Central Asian countries have in common is that after independence the leaders of all five countries had been the first secretaries of the Communist Party, with the exception of Askar Akayev, who was nevertheless part of the Soviet nomenklatura. Even the present president of Kyrgyzstan, Kirmanbek Bakiyev, was part of Akayev's ruling elite, and therefore also accustomed to Soviet styled ruling. Thus Communist Party elites have remained in power. This has ultimately affected the democratisation process in each of the five countries and is one of the main reasons why democratisation has failed. With these leaders in power it was not a surprise that the Communist Parties did not disappear from the political arenas; often the only characteristic that changed (but not always) was the name. In Kazakhstan the Communist Party renamed itself the Socialist Party, and was supportive of Nazarbayev's economic reform program. In the early 1990's it was one of the largest parties in the country. In Kyrgyzstan, the Communist Party was originally banned, and then renamed the Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan. As with the other Central Asian countries, the party has a broad base of support. Officially the Communist Party of Uzbekistan ceased to exist during the early months of independence. Instead many of the members of the former Communist Party joined the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDPU). The PDPU became the new façade for the Communist Party. As will be seen below the parties that exist in Uzbekistan (and elsewhere in Central Asia) are designed to give an image of political pluralism, while in fact the only effective ruling body is that of the president. In Turkmenistan the Communist Party, renamed the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT), totally

dominated the political scene. The situation in Tajikistan differed, as the Communist Party became directly involved in the civil war. It remained popular in spite of this, and the only other party that can compete with it in terms of popularity is the Islamic Renaissance Party.⁹³

2.3.1 Kyrgyzstan

Since independence, this small mountainous country has captured the attention of academics and proved exceptional in its domestic political environment. It has oscillated back and forth from elements of democratisation and liberalisation to authoritarianism. Its domestic scene has been the least consistent in nature and the most surprising in events. Kyrgyz exceptionalism, in regards to its openness in comparison to its neighbours, has ultimately contributed to this country becoming the third former Soviet Republic to undergo a revolution, and remove the leadership. These issues will be covered below.

From the very early years of independence, Akayev spoke about the importance of a civil society to pave the way towards democratisation. The number of social organisations, political parties, religious communities and journalists that evolved, with the president's encouragement, was incomparable to any of the other Central Asian countries. Social pluralism flourished and the country, as Anderson calls it, became 'An Island of Democracy'.⁹⁴ One of the main movements to emerge on the Kyrgyz political scene during the latter stages of perestroika and into the era of independence was the Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (DDK). This group's framework was a combination of social and political notions. One of the main splinter groups to tear away from the DDK was called Erkin Kyrgyzstan (ErK). This group described itself as a democratic group; ErK also began to show signs of taking a nationalistic position, which was also critical of the government. This party was exposed to many divisions, while its criticism of Akayev became more and more intense as the regime grew in authoritarianism. The most nationalistic party to emerge in Kyrgyzstan was Asaba. This party was only interested in defending the rights and

⁹³ Vladimir Babak, 'The Formation of Political Parties and Movements in Central Asia' in Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, pp. 156-158

⁹⁴ John Anderson, 'Creating a Framework', pp. 77-88

interest of the Kyrgyz people, and therefore not interested in the other nationalities in the country. It was often also opposed to Akayev, as he was seen too tolerant towards elements of Russification, such as the status of the Russian language. Most other parties that emerged were predominantly centralists and only moderately critical of Akayev. Despite the different social and political groups that emerged during the earlier half of the 1990's, the population was far from acquiring a clear party identification. This can be seen as one of the reasons that caused the failure of democratisation almost as soon as it had started. Political parties appeared to have failed as major political forces, thus putting at stake the evolution of a civil society. Tocqueville and Sakwa (in the previous section) warn against this and argue that democratisation cannot be forced on a society. They argue that the evolution towards democracy does not and should not follow a consistent pattern, and that every society has different characteristics and historical backgrounds, which have to be taken into consideration.

Aspiring towards the creation of a civil and political society, and identifying the importance of developing a multi-party system with strong political leaders was a very difficult task for the Central Asians as they have not had any experience with such concepts and developments before, nor have they ever fought for such principles; especially when they are compared to other nationalities, previously mentioned, in the former Soviet Union. The failure of democratisation, in many ways, is a result of the population not wishing to express or exhibit anything new or different to what has always been prescribed. Independence told a very different story in the Baltic States, which had a very strong sense of national liberation and emancipation from anything Soviet or in fact Russian.⁹⁵ The Baltic States' pre-Soviet existence also included some experience of pluralistic democracy.⁹⁶ This was very different to the Central Asian nomadic and clan-structured society. In Lithuania political parties (which mushroomed from the late 1980's) and the population made giant leaps and concrete moves in the direction of political and social pluralism.⁹⁷ This is clearly seen in these countries'

⁹⁵ V. Stanley Vardys, 'Lithuanian National Politics' in Denber (ed.), The Soviet Nationality Reader, p. 441

⁹⁶ Riina Kionka and Raivo Vetik, 'Estonia and the Estonians', in Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question, pp. 129-132

⁹⁷ Vardys, 'Lithuanian National Politics' in Denber (ed.), The Soviet Nationality Reader, p. 474

antagonistic nationalization policies towards their Russian population. The Central Asian countries' lack for the need of national emancipation has not only resulted in the failure of democratisation but has also made the country far more susceptible to Russian influences.

One of the main weaknesses of democratisation in Kyrgyzstan was the failure to create strong political actors. The failure of these political parties to grasp the attention of the population is partially because many officials remained skeptical of alternative power structures. Secondly these organisations were too often based on personalities and regions with no firm political base. In addition, many of the country's traditional characteristics of tribalism and clan loyalty also contributed in the failure of an effective pluralistic political system,⁹⁸ which resulted in the failure of democratisation. According to Linz and Stepan in the previous section, Kyrgyzstan appears to have experienced a high dosage of liberalisation, which entailed the political and social changes mentioned above. It would be difficult to describe this process as democratisation as a voting procedure had not yet taken place, although most of the signs of an evolving democracy appeared initially visible including the evolution of a civil, and political society and the rule of law. This pattern had to be maintained in order for democratisation to properly be maintained. Unfortunately for Kyrgyzstan, this would not to be the case.

Kyrgyz exceptionalism⁹⁹ showed few faults during the first few years of independence. By 1994, however, the first signs of change away from the notions of democratisation were slowly surfacing. The president appeared to be distancing himself from political, economic and social reform. Kyrgyz exceptionalism, due to the nature of the leadership, was short lived. Akayev, just like his counterparts in the other Central Asian countries was a product of the Soviet system and was easily tempted to revert back to authoritarian rule. He had the support for doing this from Russia and the other Central Asian countries, whose leaders were also increasing their grip on power. Thus

⁹⁸ John Anderson, *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy*, pp. 34-38

⁹⁹ Kyrgyz exceptionalism refers to Kyrgyzstan's positive and enthusiastic approach towards accepting and attempting to implement characteristics of democratisation. 'Exceptional' because it was the Central Asian country that took preconditions to democratisation the most seriously, and hence was the most successful in achieving them.

the failure of democratisation was a product of his method of rule and the Kyrgyz population's lack of understanding of characteristics of democratisation, such as political society. This was a traditional country, where modern forms of organisation had not developed before 1989; experience in liberal democratic rule was alien. Attempts at democratisation and creation of a civil society occurred at the same time in Kyrgyzstan, while in most successful democracies the latter always preceded the former.¹⁰⁰

From 1994 onwards, Akayev engaged in disputes with the media and began to strengthen his grip on this important element of an open and free political system. The concept of civil society came even more under attack after the parliamentary elections in 2000. Akayev was accused of neutralizing the political potentials of most of the country's opposition leaders and barring them from participating. In 1999 Felix Kulov, once part of Akayev's governing elite, created the political party Ar-Namys (Dignity), which with other opposition parties participated in the 2000 parliamentary elections. All opposition candidates came under strong attack from the government, and Kulov was even detained. The OSCE voiced its concern over the fraud behind these elections, and strongly criticised the Kyrgyz government. The government authorities continued targeting the opposition and even arrested the leader of ErK.¹⁰¹

The 2000 Presidential elections were equally undemocratic. Since the mid 1990's, Akayev had totally marginalised the two features of democratisation that Huntington placed so much importance on. Neither contestation nor participation have been carried out fairly, and elections have been a democratic facade, aimed at Akayev's reelection.¹⁰² Kulov faced even more challenges, and was eventually imprisoned when he announced that he would be participating in the elections. The general opinion domestically and internationally was that Kulov's arrest and accusations were totally politically motivated to remove him as a threat to Akayev's power base.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ John Anderson, 'Creating a Framework', pp. 77-88

¹⁰¹ Erika Dailey, 'Human Rights: Long-Simmering Kyrgyzstan Boils Over', [Eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/hrr033000.shtml), d.o 30.3.00, d.d 12.1.06, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/hrr033000.shtml>

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ Review of Felix Kulov, *The Political Party of Kyrgyzstan Ar-Namys*, d.o 17.3.03, d.d 12.1.06, http://www.ar-namys.org/en/view_temp.php?=140

The elites and the president's extreme grip on power has been one of the reasons why Kyrgyzstan failed to democratize. Even after the Tulip revolution, which will be discussed below, Bakiyev's resistance to curb executive power has gone against the wish of his population and stamped out hopes for democratisation to develop.¹⁰⁴ Both the Russian and Kyrgyz regimes do not want to see an escalation to the unrest that triggered the Tulip revolution. Russia is very hostile to coloured revolutions in the former Soviet Union and has consequently supported all Central Asian regimes in spite of their treatment towards their population. This has promoted Russia's political influence amongst the Central Asian presidents.

The 2005 parliamentary elections created the final spark of discontent amongst the population. The elections were a clear indication of the extent the country had moved away from liberalisation and democratisation. Even before the election results became public, unrest had been manifesting in the south of the country over speculations that the regime had manipulated the results to its own advantage. As a result, the entire political atmosphere in the country was highly charged. It had been a mere few months since the protests in Ukraine, resulting from controversial election results, had brought about another coloured revolution in the former Soviet Union. Leading up to the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan, anger at the marginalisation of the opposition and the victory of the pro-Akayev candidates finally triggered a wave of protest that reached Bishkek.

On March 24 2005 hundreds of people stormed government buildings, including the parliament and the president's palace, in protest to the rigged election results. The scene and atmosphere that prevailed was unseen during any of the other coloured revolutions. There was no clear organisation to the protests, no clear objectives or agenda and most important, there was no clear opposition or leadership. There existed a kind of mob mentality, which took control of events in the capital. Looting and violence spread, and the country appeared too often too close to the brink of total anarchy. The revolution was a protest with no long-term strategy or aim. The people that were involved were predominantly angry people, not intellectuals. The

¹⁰⁴ Al-Jazeera.Net, 'Kyrgyz Leader Faces Calls to Quit', d.o 19.2.07, d.d 22.2.07, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/EF71D13D-D87B-419A-ACA0-AB0957>

intellectuals stood at the periphery of the revolution. This is one main reason why many today see the Kyrgyz Tulip revolution as a failure, which brought with it very little change. What some educated Kyrgyz argue today is that an intellectual revolution is now needed, one with a strategy and an agenda of change and reform.¹⁰⁵

The main issues of concern today revolve around the kind of changes that have been introduced in the country since Akayev's ousting from power, and the appointment of Bakiyev as president in July 2005. Has the country's Tulip revolution and the removal of Akayev from power reverted the country back to its previous route of liberalisation and democratisation? Unfortunately, the answer according to Kyrgyz political scientists and most importantly to the Kyrgyz people is no. Real change did not occur anywhere in the country. Bakiyev was not prepared to be president; he was a member of parliament with no anticipations of becoming a prominent political figure. The revolution was a result of the growing hatred towards Akayev and his family. Years of nepotism and fraud had motivated the Kyrgyz people to reject the corruptness of the regime and achieve a revolution. Kyrgyzstan's relatively open society, and the acceptance of some political maneuvering allowed protesters to mobilize and carry out a revolt against the same body of authority, which had given them this power.¹⁰⁶

What lessons could be learnt from the Kyrgyz example? Each Central Asian country reacted differently to it, although all leaders were extremely wary of a replica in their own country. Did the Kyrgyz example of allowing too much reform and freedom result in a population not scared to rebel against the leadership? If this was the case, then should other authoritarian regimes isolate themselves completely from liberalisation and democratisation in order not to encourage a revolution or is each country different? Did external powers play a role in sparking events? Did the hard political, economic and social domestic environment help fuel the Tulip revolution? Is Kyrgyzstan a special case or a mix of all of the above? Some of these questions are answered below; some are tackled with more detail in the chapters related to Russian and American influences in the region.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Iris Beybutova, Dean, Professor, Kyrgyz State National University: School of International Relations, Bishkek, November 2005

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

Kyrgyzstan's unmatched levels of freedom inevitably played a role in encouraging vast numbers of the population to take to the streets. The Kyrgyz people were no longer going to tolerate the conditions and deceit, which Akayev had exposed them to.¹⁰⁷ The political, economic and social situation in the country has not only led to the rise of Islamic sentiments, but also inevitably played a large role in the eruption of the protests that led to the removal of Akayev from power. Political suffocation and economic difficulties were blamed on the regime; injustice was coupled with hardship.¹⁰⁸ The USA's role in the series of coloured revolutions hitting the region has not had equal affects in the three countries affected by this. As seen in both chapters concerned with Russian and American influences in Central Asia, American NGO's and democracy promoting initiatives have always been regarded with skepticism, yet their presence cannot be ignored. The USA played a role in supporting local NGO's to step up their opposition to the Akayev regime. They indirectly encouraged what little existed of civil society to fight back.¹⁰⁹

This mix of predominantly internal and some external characteristics, which led to the events of March 2005, have not contributed to any form of real domestic change in Kyrgyzstan today. Bakiyev is not a reformer, and has changed very little of the country's external and internal politics. He has faced growing criticism and political opposition, there are few media outlets that are prepared to criticise him and the press is wary of the regime just as it was during the Akayev era.¹¹⁰ Although he cannot be compared to Akayev, his authority is slowly increasing. Civil youth organisations such as Kel Kel (revitalization), played a big role in the Tulip Revolution, and were originally very much pro-Bakiyev. The organisation is made up of around 1000 students who want to see political reform and electoral transparency in the country. They promote notions of liberalisation and democratisation. This has consequently

¹⁰⁷ This was the general reaction I got when speaking to students from the State National University in Bishkek who had participated in the events that led to the Tulip revolution. It often seemed that the main spark for the revolution was more concerned with removing Akayev from power, than to enforce long lasting reforms.

¹⁰⁸ When speaking to some of the students that participated in the revolution, most agreed that this was one of the root causes why people were so angry.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Bakyt Beshimov, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, November 2005

¹¹⁰ The Bishkek Observer, 'Promoting Media Freedom Proving More Difficult', 17.11.05

moved them further away from the Bakiyev regime. They have reached an extent where they are even calling themselves opposed to the present regime.¹¹¹

Kyrgyzstan's failure to democratize is fairly typical of a country that not only places too much relevance to tribal and clan politics but also appears unable to break from authoritarian rule and Soviet-styled governing. This makes it more sympathetic to Russian influences than American or Islamic. As seen above, its relationship with Russia further allows the regime to hold onto power and receive political support in the face of international and domestic pressure. The fault lines also lay in the population's mentality and their lack of national and political direction.

2.3.2 Kazakhstan

This advantaged country in economic potential often stands out from the other Central Asian countries in terms of general population wealth, modernisation, Russification and high proportion of ethnic Russians. However, in terms of liberalisation and democratisation it fits the general path the other countries have taken. Democratisation has failed and the reasons for this are similar to the reasons in the other Central Asian countries despite Kazakhstan's distinct characteristics. Since independence it has not enjoyed the same positive reputation related to freedom and liberty as Kyrgyzstan, but has remained more liberal than the other three Central Asian countries. In more ways than not, Nazarbayev has maintained stability and security in this country. Kazakhstan has showed resistance to the types of instability and violence the other Central Asian countries have experienced since independence.

From the initial stages of independence, Nazarbayev unlike Karimov and Niyazov, did not set about creating a cult of personality; he appeared genuinely interested in promoting his country's economic potentials and consequently took a more liberal approach to politics than the other two leaders. Nevertheless, he has not been prepared to tolerate criticism or challenges and has been known to show no reservations in

¹¹¹ A member of Kel Kel, who did not want to be named, told me about the non-partisan, pro-reform characteristics of this organisation, which is mainly composed of university students. Bishkek, November 2005

getting rid of those he does not approve of. This attitude has played a large role in the failure of democratisation in Kazakhstan. In addition, Nazarbayev belongs to a particular tribe that has throughout the Soviet period, dominated the political scene of Kazakhstan.¹¹² Therefore, Nazarbayev is never likely to step down from power and allow democratisation to evolve as a result of his tribal history and reputation. He made attempts at creating a party conscious society, although his attitudes towards the establishment of a civil and political society fell short of Lipset's expectations of a developing civil society. Nazarbayev focused his attention on the economic as opposed to the political growth of his country.

Nazarbayev, nevertheless, did attempt to make some efforts at creating a multi-party environment. One of the first parties to be registered a couple of months before the disintegration of the USSR was the People's Congress. This party appealed to both Kazakhs and Russians, and was initially supportive of the president before its chairman acquired personal ambitions. The Union of People's Unity for Kazakhstan (SNEK) was one of the first parties to register after independence. This party's cohesiveness was marred by its leaders competition for influence and wider political ambitions. There also existed four Kazakh nationalist movement during the early years of independence. Three of them-Azat, the Republic Party, and Zheltokstan- had similar roots. The fourth party Alash, or sometimes referred to as Alash-Orda advocated nationalism along a pro-Islamic line (this is discussed in the chapter related to Islamic influences in Central Asia). All four parties called for a multi-party and multi-ethnic future for the country. Nazarbayev's lack of commitment to civil liberties and other essential elements of democratisation made him as early as 1992 crack down on the activities of these movements, and target newspapers that supported them.¹¹³ These organisations were not strong enough to challenge his rule, as the Kazakh population seemed unable to outline a distinct Kazakh identity, separate from what the elites dictated.

One of the reasons democratisation in Kazakhstan appears to have failed is because the country is still in the process of nation building. Nation building, creating a civil and

¹¹² Svanberg, 'Kazakhstan and the Kazakhs', in Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question, pp. 322-324

¹¹³ Martha Brill Olcott, The Kazakhs, California, 1995, pp. 278-279

political society and achieving democracy are not processes that can occur at the same time. Nazarbayev's grip on power has achieved stability but at the same time has confirmed his authoritarianism, which has played a large role in the failure of democratisation.¹¹⁴

Nazarbayev's economic agenda was far more impressive than his political. He filled his first administration with reformers, particularly economist reformers, in order to help him promote political and economic liberalisation. Nazarbayev's problems with parliament started from an early stage. Many of the members of parliament had different economic plans to the president and his economic reformers. This friction intensified after the passing of the first constitution in 1993. One of the issues the parliament was opposed to was the IMF-stabilization program, which Nazarbayev was very keen to promote. Nazarbayev had promoted privatization since 1991, yet still the country was behind Russia in its economic reform program. He realised that the economic recovery for Kazakhstan was facing some unwanted challenges, which resulted in Nazarbayev dissolving parliament in 1993, as he saw some of its members as the main obstacles to economic change.¹¹⁵

Nazarbayev succeeded in pushing through a new constitution in August 1995, which increased his power. He was able to achieve this by conducting a referendum, which allowed him to do so. This is a pattern seen throughout the Central Asian countries: referendums abused to grant the leadership what it wants. In the case of Kazakhstan democratisation was not what the leadership wanted. The 1995 constitution concentrated power in the hands of the executive.¹¹⁶ Kazakhstan was firmly on its way towards authoritarianism. By 1998 Nazarbayev had further control of the political milieu. He brought forward the presidential election from 2000 to 1999, consequently giving less time and opportunity for opposition leaders to organize a competing presidential campaign. The failure of democratisation was sealed with these tactics. Nazarbayev was comfortably re-elected in 1999, as were his supporters in the

¹¹⁴ Roger D. Kangas, 'State Building and Civil Society in Central Asia', in Tismaneanu (ed.), Political Culture, p. 271

¹¹⁵ Sally N. Cummings, Kazakhstan: Power and the Elite, London, New York, 2005, pp. 23-25

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 26

parliamentary elections of that year.¹¹⁷ It was also during this period that the media experienced some of the most brutal crackdowns. Independent radio and television network were targeted and shut down, and national television fell under the control of a company run by the president's daughter.¹¹⁸

Unsurprisingly, the parliamentary election in 2004 followed a similar pattern to the previous elections. The coloured revolution epidemic had not yet caused concern for the authoritarian leaders in the region. The three main pro-Nazarbayev parties- Otan, Asar and the AIST bloc- won the majority of the seats in the lower house. One seat went to the moderate opposition group Ak Zhol, while the radical opposition group composed of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan and the Communist party of Kazakhstan won no seats.¹¹⁹ The presidential elections in December 2005, as the parliamentary elections the previous year, fell short of all the criteria of democratisation in regards to transparent, fair and competitive elections, putting Kazakhstan far from the threshold of democratizing countries. Some scholarly literature has suggested, especially in regards to the presidential elections, that Nazarbayev would almost certainly have won even if he had given the opposition a fair challenge, along the lines of Schumpeter and Dahl's rules regarding the electorate process. This argument suggests that Nazarbayev could have achieved some levels of democratisation and remained in power. However, as a Soviet-era dictator accustomed to a certain style of rule, he could not adapt to change, even if the outcome would be in his favour. Nazarbayev has offered political and especially economic stability; this appears to have been more important than democratic details of elections.

Although Nazarbayev showed signs of concern at the prospect of a coloured revolution in the run up to the presidential elections in 2005, many were confident this would not be the case for Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev's rule is not democratic, yet he has managed to provide for his population stability and relative wealth.¹²⁰ His accommodating attitude towards Kazakhstan's ethnic Russians has also helped make him relatively

¹¹⁷ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Kazakhstan', London, New York, Hong Kong, 2005, p. 4

¹¹⁸ Cummings, *Kazakhstan: Power and the Elite*, p. 27

¹¹⁹ Bhavna Dave, 'Kazakhstan's 2004 Parliamentary Elections: Managing Loyalty and Support for the Regime', *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 52, no. 1, January/February 2005, pp.3-14

¹²⁰ Interview with Iris Beybutova

popular with them. Bhavna Dave agrees that Nazarbayev has achieved legitimacy with his population. She argues that the regime of Nazarbayev, although deeply authoritarian, cannot be compared to that of Karimov or Niyazov. These two leaders have shown the most resistance to any form of political or economic reform. Nazarbayev, on the complete contrary, has made Kazakhstan an economic power base for the region. As stated above, his country enjoys the levels of stability unmatched anywhere else in Central Asia. Most importantly, Kazakhstan has achieved recognition from the EU and the USA of having a market economy.¹²¹

2.3.3 Uzbekistan

From the outset of independence, Karimov did not share the same reformist language used by Akayev or Nazarbayev. Karimov has emphasised the importance of creating stability before reform can be tackled. The regime's repression has gradually been increasing since independence; although the change has been less dramatic than in the two countries mentioned above. Karimov has consistently consolidated political power in the office of the president, and increasingly strengthened his hold on all aspects of civil society. Linz and Stepan's civil society most definitely does not exist. Consequently the internal situation in this country is very eruptive, and Karimov's hold on all political activity is resulting in the radicalisation of some movements. The internal imbroglio is very different to that of Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan has a volatile internal situation; it has problems with the rise in Islamicisation, hence a large challenge to the power base of the president. The rise in Islam is a threat to the Karimov regime as much as it is a result of it (this point is explained in more detail in the chapter related to Islamic influences in Central Asia). This kind of situation does not exist in Kazakhstan; in addition the economic reforms in Kazakhstan have played a role in defusing the tension that could have mounted against the regime. Uzbekistan does not enjoy such privileges. Thus, it is in a situation of internal turmoil in the shape of political oppression, economic stagnation and social dislocation.

As elsewhere in Central Asia, Uzbekistan experienced little change during the Gorbachev years. One of the main reasons for this was due to the lack of national

¹²¹ Dave, 'Kazakhstan's 2004 Parliamentary Elections: Managing Loyalty and Support for the Regime', pp. 3-14

consciousness that existed in Uzbekistan. As a result, the Uzbeks appeared to have a weaker incentive to introduce change and thus allow a democratisation process to evolve, as Armenia for example. The Armenians strong national identity aided them in distancing themselves from Russia. They had their own distinct Armenian identity to fill in the vacuum left by the Soviet identity.¹²² Uzbekistan was not in this situation, although in comparison to most of the other Central Asian countries, they have the strongest national identity. Their firm and long Islamic history filled some of the gaps left behind by the Soviet identity, especially in comparison to the two Central Asian countries discussed above. Uzbekistan's stronger Islamic identity does not appear to have played a role in the country's failure to democratize. This is most evident by the fact that all Central Asian countries have failed to democratize, irrespective of how strong Islamic influences are. In addition, the Uzbeks have a strong autocratic tradition dating back to Tamerlane and Genghis Khan. The country's strong Islamic identity has made the Uzbeks less susceptible to Russian influences.

The first presidential election witnessed the most amounts of political pluralism and openness seen in the history of the country. Even from that early stage restrictions were made on rival parties and movements, although movements such as Birlik were able to operate with some amount of freedom. Birlik was formed prior to the disintegration of the USSR, but only gained momentum afterwards. It presented itself as a national democratic movement, and its objectives were/are primarily concerned with democratic principles, and Uzbek national revival. Birlik was allowed to register at the end of 1991 but was banned in December 1992. It has tried to register since then but has failed in the face of increasing challenges from the Uzbek authorities.¹²³ Birlik has acquired a certain amount of flexibility and has even worked with Islamic oriented organisations, such as the Islamic Renaissance Party of Uzbekistan and Adolat.¹²⁴ The only party it has refused to cooperate with has been the Communist Party, which was known for its alignment with the government. Birlik shares many characteristics with Erk, which is Birlik's sister party. While both movements are national-democratic,

¹²² Edmund M. Herzig, 'Armenia and the Armenians', in Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question*, pp. 248-264

¹²³ Babak, 'The Formation of Political Parties' in Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, p. 152

¹²⁴ Yaacov Ro'i, 'Islam in the FSU: An Inevitable Impediment to Democracy?' (hereafter 'Islam in the FSU') in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, pp. 108-109

Birlik's emphasis is more on nationalism, while Erk places democracy first. Both these parties and in particular Erk, are relatively active underground secular movements today. Throughout the 1990's, Birlik and Erk's leaders, of whom the most prominent has been Muhammad Solih the chairman of Erk, have either left the country or are continuously being targeted and undermined. Birlik and Erk have also helped in revealing to the international community the kind of human rights abuses and lack of all elements of democratisation that the Uzbek regime is guilty of.¹²⁵ Karimov accused Solih of being behind the 1999 Tashkent bombings. One of the main reasons for Karimov's hatred of Solih is not only because of his emphasis on the abuse of human rights by the authorities, but also because he ran against him in the 1991 presidential elections.¹²⁶ In the early 1990's, Karimov also targeted Solih's family as a way to punish him for his political activities. Erk's newspaper has come under increased scrutiny; this was especially the case in 1994 when a huge wave of arrests was launched against all the Uzbek opposition. Most of Erk's activists were jailed. The reasons for the distinct targeting of Erk were a result of the party's newspaper being resumed by the émigré members of the organisation.¹²⁷

As stated above Birlik and Erk are movements that stand for democratisation and nationalism, and although they are relatively active abroad and voice out their complaints and criticisms of the Karimov regime, they do not affect the political scene in Tashkent. They are ultimately weak organisations, which have a relatively small power base and not much popular support. Their failure as national political organisations is further evidence that Uzbek society has not reached a stage in its evolution where it acknowledges and supports parties that promote its national consciousness, such as in the Baltic or the Caucasus. This is one of the main reasons behind the failure of democratisation, national parties need to evolve and promote an alternative to the Soviet styled rule offered by the present elites. In order for this to be successful, a distinct national identity needs to first evolve and the population needs to

¹²⁵ Talib Yakub, 'Human Rights in Uzbekistan: The Atmosphere of Terror and Violence', Popular Movement Birlik Party, d.o 1.11.01, d.d 2.2.06, <http://www.birlik.net/page-4.uk>

¹²⁶ Abdummanob Polat, 'Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?' in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.), Civil Society in Central Asia, Seattle, London, 1999, p. 140

¹²⁷ N.I. Petrov, 'Political Stability in the Conditions of the Command-Administrative Regime' in Alexei Vassiliev (ed.), Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenges in the Post-Soviet Era (hereafter Political and Economic Challenges), London, 2001, pp. 86-87

change their Soviet perception of 'the authorities' and realise that they can challenge them if they have an alternative path to follow. In general, the blind acceptance the population tends to give the regime allows those in power not to take responsibility for their actions.¹²⁸ This is one of the reasons why democratisation is doomed to fail in such a society.

The only time the Uzbek population did challenge the authorities and show resistance to the ruthless policies of the Karimov regime was during the Andijan events that occurred in May 2005. These events are thoroughly covered and discussed in the chapter analyzing Islamic influences in Central Asia. A group of religious men in Andijan in the Ferghana Valley were imprisoned for belonging to an Islamic organisation called Akramiya. These men also held small businesses, which provided jobs for a number of men in the region. Protests broke out (the details related to these events are covered in chapter 6) in support of the Akramiya men and in protest of the socio-economic situation in the Valley. The authorities' reaction to the protestors not only caused a huge number of casualties but also triggered a large outcry from the international arena and human rights organisations.¹²⁹ The Andijan events highlighted two very important issues. The first one was related to the support the Karimov regime received from the Russian government at a time when it was being heavily criticised by the international arena. This incident clearly showed that Putin's policies were going to be supportive of authoritarian leaders in Central Asia. This support not only made the Karimov regime stronger but also pushed it closer to Russia. It was a message to other Central Asian leaders that Russia was going to support the continuation of their power so long as they were loyal in return. This explains why Russian influences are becoming stronger in the region. This also helps explain the failure of democratisation. Russia is promoting these elites that do not want to democratize in order to stay in power. So long as they preserve the status quo democratisation will always fail, and the status quo looks to be preserved with the help of Russia.

¹²⁸ Shirin Akiner, 'Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks', in Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question*, p. 339

¹²⁹ Paolo Verme, 'Macroeconomic Policies and Social Unrest in Uzbekistan', *Post Soviet Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 3, July-September 2006, pp 276-287

The second issue that was highlighted as a result of Andijan was that the most powerful challenge to the growing authoritarianism for the Karimov regime came within Islam. This is why Islamic influences are also gaining strength amongst certain strata of the Uzbek population. This second point is expanded on in the chapter looking at Islamic influences in Central Asia.

Adolat was another organisation to evolve during the early years of independence. This was the first Islamicised movement Karimov had to deal with. This group evolved in the Ferghana Valley, and is seen today as the predecessor of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. In March 1992, Karimov targeted Adolat and suppressed most of its activities.¹³⁰ By that early stage, Karimov's rule had already shown signs of increased authoritarianism; he had removed some of his main opponents from office, and created posts to help him control the country's twelve regions. The 1992 constitution confirmed Karimov head of state, and declared the republic secular and democratic, where freedom of expression and religion were guaranteed. Nothing of that sort was guaranteed in reality.¹³¹

Steven Fish refers to regimes, such as the Uzbek one as suffering from 'super-presidentialism', which is characterised by investing all power in the president and consequently giving him great amount of control on political life and institutions. Attacking the media, torturing journalists, punishing opponents and engaging in anti-democratic behaviour, such as what happened in Andijan, reconfirms Karimov's status as a fully fledged dictator.¹³² Officially, Uzbekistan claims to have free media and respect freedom of worship. Since 1995 the government has been continuously cracking down on independent media sources and increasing censorship. Censorship reached such unimagined levels that many ordinary citizens in Uzbekistan were not aware of the magnitude of events in neighbouring Kyrgyzstan that resulted in the Tulip revolution. Coverage of the riots in Bishkek, and the ousting of Akayev from power

¹³⁰ Petrov, 'Political Stability in the Conditions of the Command-Administrative Regime' in Vassiliev (ed.), *Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenges*, pp. 86-99

¹³¹ Neil J. Melvin, *Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road*, London, 2000, pp. 29-

33

¹³² Fish, 'Conclusion', pp. 228-234

were not broadcast on Uzbek television during the period they were happening.¹³³ Prior to the Andijan events, which have further intensified control over the media, television and radio stations, the 1999 Tashkent bombings contributed to a massive wave of government control, oppression and abuse of civil rights. Not only were opposition parties and movements (Islamic and non-Islamic) all targeted, their leaders were also subjected to all kinds of accusations. A vast number of mosques were shut down throughout the country. Functioning mosques were under government surveillance, increasing the amount of tension and fear for those who went to pray.¹³⁴

In regards to elections, Karimov's election record falls extremely short of all the criteria for democratisation. In March 1995, a nationwide referendum was carried out, which consequently allowed him to remain president till 2000. In so doing, he avoided election in 1996. Other than the banning of some movements and parties from legally registering, Uzbekistan's first parliamentary elections in 1994 were in theory multi-candidate, although in reality they were far from democratic. The candidates allowed to contest came from only two political parties, both of which were pro-government. The Popular Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDPU) (former Communist Party) was one; the other was the Progress of the Homeland Party. This latter party was founded very soon after independence and is in essence an extension of the PDPU. Even though the candidates were fielded from two parties only, the election of these candidates was also marred with fraud.¹³⁵

In 2000 two candidates took part in the presidential elections. The PDPU, with the consent of the president, nominated Abdulhafiz Djalalov. Karimov, registered as a candidate for the newly established Fidokorlar party, was the second candidate. The latter party has its own newspaper and helps give the impression that a party culture does exist in Uzbekistan; it is a party made by the president for the president. The victory of Karimov in the elections was undisputed. The existence of a second candidate was nothing more than a symbol of competition for the sake of a democratic

¹³³ I heard this from Uzbek friends and acquaintances. During the Tulip revolution and during the clashes in Andijan many felt completely isolated from the world. It is believed that Karimov was uneasy about his population knowing the facts about these two events.

¹³⁴ I saw many of the non-functioning mosques in Tashkent and Samarkand, and was told that they had been closed down since the 1999 Tashkent bombings.

¹³⁵ Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy*, London, 1998, pp. 4-6

facade. In reality the principles of free election, and the will to create a polyarchal state were far from Karimov's intentions. Solih (from exile) strongly attacked the predictable victory of Karimov, and further highlighted the undemocratic nature of the regime.¹³⁶ The 2004 parliamentary elections were very far from all principles of democratisation. Birlik and Erk were automatically excluded, not to mention the Islamic parties that have never had the opportunity to legally function. The climate of severe harassment aimed at the opposition meant that the pro-government parties were the only parties allowed to participate in the pretence multi-party elections. The media played a subdued role, while the Uzbek authorities targeted independent sources of information, including western NGO's.¹³⁷

2.3.4 Turkmenistan

Democratisation in Turkmenistan is a phenomenon completely alien to the leadership and absolutely unfelt by the population, not even in the most basic forms of liberalisation. The process of democratisation never started. The character of the Turkmenbashi is perhaps the main reason why democratisation completely failed in Turkmenistan. In theory he encouraged nationalism in his country, in practice everything he promoted rotated around his cult of personality.¹³⁸ His idea of nationalism focused on himself being the father of the Turkmens and dictating to his population how they ought to be nationalistic. Any ripple effects of a wave of democratisation appear to have bypassed Turkmenistan. The country's tribal origins and the lack of a prominent individual or movement pushing for reform, may have contributed to the failure of democratisation. Nevertheless, the character of Saparmurad Niyazov has been pivotal in this country's total rejection of democratic and liberal principles. Stephen Sestanovich makes this observation when comparing Akayev to Niyazov, he says, " Personality definitely matters....the single most

¹³⁶ Eurasianet.org, 'Presidential Elections in Uzbekistan 2000', d.d 12.2.06, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/election/uzbekistan/presanal119.html>

¹³⁷ Adolat Najimova, 'Analysis: How Real are Prospects for Free and Democratic Elections in Uzbekistan?', Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, d.o 16.12.04, d.d 23.1.06, http://www.rferl.org/features/features_Article.aspx?m=12&y=2004&id=2DF64049

¹³⁸ Annette Bohr, 'Turkmenistan and the Turkmens', in Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question*, pp. 354-358

important factor that has put the two countries on different trajectories is the character of the two leaders”.¹³⁹

Niyazov has created a cult of personality unmatched in the region. It is at times very difficult to evaluate what is happening in Turkmenistan and what the main threats are as a result of Niyazov's domination of state matters and Turkmen life. All power resides in the hands of Niyazov, and all other mechanisms of state are just facades; the legislature and judiciary have absolutely no power and no control over the affairs of the country. The Niyazov regime is not only a dictatorship, such as in Uzbekistan, but an entire system spun around the ideology and character of the president, which is often not only harmful to the internal stability of the country but also to its foreign policy. Niyazov has also isolated himself from the other Central Asian countries. From the early years of independence, he carved a separate path for the Turkmen people, separating them from their neighbours.¹⁴⁰

Independent Turkmenistan's first constitution in 1992 placed all power in the hands of the executive. Such strong executive power was justified as necessary for the transitional period from totalitarianism to democracy. Like all the other Central Asian regimes, Niyazov's authoritarianism and control over his population has steadily been increasing since independence. The Democratic Party of Turkmenistan (DPT), which was the former Communist Party, is the only legal and registered political party in the country.¹⁴¹ The Turkmen today are not party conscious; hence the characteristics of a civil and political society are far from being achieved. Niyazov faces the most amount of opposition from the émigrés, such as from the United Democratic Opposition of Turkmenistan; the other opposition in exile is the United Democratic Forces of Turkmenistan.¹⁴² Both these opposition groups have not been a source of major challenge to the Niyazov regime.

¹³⁹ Stephen Sestanovich, 'Promoting Democracy', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, 2003, p. 152

¹⁴⁰ Olcott, 'Ceremony and Substance' in Mandelbaum (ed.), *Central Asia and the World*, p. 31

¹⁴¹ K.P. Dudarev, 'A Post-Communist Authoritarian Regime' in Vassiliev (ed.), *Political and Economic Challenges*, pp. 132-139

¹⁴² Martha Brill Olcott, *Central Asia's Second Chance*, Washington, D.C., 2005, p. 277

In the first presidential elections held in 1992, Niyazov stood as the sole candidate for the job. Niyazov has never pretended to engage in competitive campaigning to win the people's vote. A flawed referendum, as also seen in the other Central Asian countries, held in 1994 cancelled the 1997 presidential elections and guaranteed Niyazov the presidency till 2002. In 1999, however, the constitution was altered making Niyazov president for life.¹⁴³ Therefore, independent Turkmenistan has never witness any form of a free, fair, transparent and contested electorate system. Democratisation never started in order for it to fail.

Niyazov's crackdowns on the opposition and total monopoly of all aspects of civil society have also meant a severe grip on the media and other information networks. There is no independent media, and all information is very much controlled and monitored by the authorities. Even during the Brezhnev era, Turkmenistan saw more freedom, especially in regards to censorship and press, than it does under Niyazov.¹⁴⁴ Travelling has become increasingly difficult, with severe restrictions on entering and leaving the country. The situation became even worse after the 2002 failed assassination attempt on the president; a wave of purges and arrests followed, putting Turkmenistan's human rights record at an all time low. The OSCE was particularly alarmed by the severity of the authorities' reaction to anyone who was suspected to have known about the attempted assassination.¹⁴⁵

The Rukhnama is a prime example of how power has affected the Turkmenbashi. This book alone is a contradiction to the free and liberal society that scholars of democratisation envisage. It is a book, which calls itself equal to the Koran and the Bible, and its principles are forced on the lives of the Turkmen people. The principles of the Rukhnama are given by far greater priority than those related to democratisation. The only ideology the Turkmenbashi is promoting is that, which he has created for his citizens. This book does not only hinder the development of democracy but also interferes with Islam and its teachings.¹⁴⁶ Niyazov says, 'my main guideline is the

¹⁴³ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Turkmenistan', 2005, p. 5

¹⁴⁴ Boris Rumer, 'The Search for Stability in Central Asia', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?, New York, 2002, p. 4

¹⁴⁵ Olcott, Central Asia's Second Chance, p. 162

¹⁴⁶ Saparmurad Niyazov, Rukhnama: Book of the Spirit, <http://www.rukhnama.com/>

Rukhnama. As a systematic worldview, with civil content and methods of use in different areas of society.’¹⁴⁷

Reasons for the failure of democratisation in Turkmenistan include the lack of a national identity to help the Turkmens develop political parties and create a cohesive political path for their country, and the existence of a profoundly tribal based society. The biggest challenge, however, appeared to be the Turkmenbashi himself. Democratisation will always fail when there is a leader like the Turkmenbashi in power and if a leader is in power for many years then even after his death the system cannot change overnight if it will change at all.

2.3.5 Tajikistan

Tajik nationalism differs from the other Central Asian countries. Tajikistan was initially included in the Uzbek SSR before its status was elevated to SSR. Some of the literature available indicates that the Tajik identity started to evolve as a result of the national delimitation that allowed Tajikistan to become a separate national entity. Following its national delimitation, Tajikistan became more involved in Central Asia’s political life and started to develop a stronger identity of its own.¹⁴⁸ The lack of a cohesive Tajik national identity in the early years of the development of the USSR was further evident when in 1924 the Tajiks accepted (without the slightest resistance) the Uzbek-Tajik delimitation, which deprived them of the ancient cities of Samarkand and Bukhara.¹⁴⁹ Until today these cities, although in Uzbekistan, are vastly populated by ethnic Tajiks and Persian is the main language used in non-official functions.¹⁵⁰

Tajikistan’s story with democracy differs in comparison to its neighbours. Although each Central Asian country has its own approach towards democratisation, Tajikistan was distinct because it never had the chance to experiment with it during the period when elements of democratisation and liberalisation reached their post independence peak in the region. The country plunged into a civil war at the outset of independence,

¹⁴⁷ Saparmurad Niyazov, Rukhnama: Reflections on the Spiritual Values of the Turkmen, Ashghabad, 2005, p. 20

¹⁴⁸ Haugen, The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia, p. 165

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.* p. 153

¹⁵⁰ This was an observation made while in Samarkand.

which lasted for five years (1992-97). As the civil war was predominantly fought between the Islamists and the former Communists, the details of the civil war will be analysed in the chapter related to Islamic influences in Central Asia.

Tajikistan became the only Central Asian country not to follow the same pattern of gradual increased authoritarianism during the early 1990's. The civil war was an indication that Islam played a large role in the Tajik national identity, enough to spark a conflict that lasted five years. The civil war cannot be blamed for the failure of democratisation; evidence for this is that the more stable Central Asian countries are not more democratic today than Tajikistan. At present, democratisation is continuing to fail because neither the Tajik population nor the elites are willing to change the status quo. The Rahmonov regime is growing in authoritarianism and is mimicking the regimes of the other Central Asian countries. This is in its favour as it further consolidates its power base and marginalizes the opposition, while at the same time maintaining political support from Russia. The population exhausted by the devastation and instability caused by the civil war appear unwilling to resist the increasing repression from the regime. Thus democratisation has inevitably failed.

The appointment of Rakhmon Nabiev, a former Communist First Secretary, by the Supreme Soviet as leader of independent Tajikistan in 1991, evoked a wave of protest against what people saw as a restoration of communist control. This revealed a form of national unity and consciousness rarely seen in the other Central Asian countries. This willingness to attack the ruling elites was later to play a large role in the eruption of the civil war. The individual most of the population wanted as president was Abkhar Turadzhonzoda, an Islamic spiritual leader. These early signs were indications of the role religion would play in the politics and lives of Tajikistan and the Tajiks.

The first presidential elections held in November 1991 were far from being democratic, but there did appear to be some form of competition between the two candidates. At that stage Tajikistan appeared to be affected by the ripple effects of democratisation experienced in the wider region. The first presidential elections had

two candidates, Nabiev and the opposition leader Davlat Khudonazarov. Nabiev received 57% of the vote and Khudonazarov 37%.¹⁵¹

A trigger of demonstrations against the regime unfolded after the elections and escalated into what became the Tajik civil war. In a tactical move, the opposition united and called itself the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) and was composed mainly of IRP members and democrats; the backbone of the opposition were the Islamists, headed by the IRP leader, Said Abdullah Nuri. Their popularity and strength grew through the media and opposition publications.¹⁵²

The violence and bloodshed that unfolded between 1992-1997 served as a threat not only to the future of Tajikistan, but also to its neighbours. Nabiev resigned as a result of the escalating violence, and was replaced by Emomali Rahmonov in 1992. Once the civil war started, Tajikistan lost all chances of a transition towards reform. In many ways, Tajikistan has been robbed of its transitional period; it was neither given sufficient time nor opportunity to experiment. The Islamic character of the UTO grew in strength, this was mainly as a result of the IRP's own evolution as an Islamic party, and as a result of the Taliban's rise to power in neighbouring Afghanistan. By the late 1990's, the unsettled situation in Tajikistan was becoming of serious concern to Russia and the other Central Asian countries. In June 1997, the General Agreement on Peace and National Reconciliation was signed between the Rahmonov regime and the UTO. This ceasefire was primarily achieved with the help of the Russians, and also as a result of the Uzbek and Iranian governments' mediating role. According to the agreement, the IRP would disarm. In return the government agreed to give the UTO 30% of all government posts and guaranteed them participation in political life. For the first time in Central Asian history, a step was taken to legitimize an Islamic party, and give it a role in governing the country.¹⁵³ It is therefore unsurprising that the Tajik elite is susceptible to Russian political influence, not only did their survival rest on Russia's role in the peace treaty with the IRP, they are also guaranteed Russian security from

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *The International Politics of Central Asia*, pp. 168-169

¹⁵² Saodat Olimova, 'Opposition in Tajikistan: Pro et Contra' (hereafter 'Opposition in Tajikistan') in Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, pp. 245-253

¹⁵³ Olimova, 'Opposition in Tajikistan', pp. 255-256

the largest Russian military base outside Dushanbe (this will be covered in more detail in the following chapter).

Since 1997, the Rahmonov government has slowly become increasingly dominant and authoritarian, resembling more and more the regimes of its neighbours. In 1999, changes were made to the constitution enhancing the power of the president. In 2000 the country had its first multi-party parliamentary elections. Rahmonov could not stop the IRP from participating in these elections, as that was one of the main conditions of the National Reconciliation Agreement. Nevertheless, the elections were carried out under increased authoritarianism.¹⁵⁴

The existence of an opposition in all theories of democratisation is given a lot of importance, as is the ability of the opposition to achieve political power if the population gives it the legitimacy to do so. Ghassan Salame in 'Democracy without Democrats' (previously discussed), places a lot of emphasis on Arab/Islamic exceptionalism, which would automatically rule out any aspects of liberalism that the Tajik government could have achieved by incorporating the Islamicised opposition. In theory, Tajikistan has a more genuine multi-party system, with a real opposition than any other Central Asian country. Nevertheless, by 2000 elite centered authoritarianism, seen in the other four Central Asian countries, had also included Rahmonov.¹⁵⁵ The opposition's incorporation into the government is becoming nothing more than a façade. The Rahmonov regime is increasingly being accused of abusing the ceasefire agreement reached in 1997 by pushing the IRP further and further away from politics. The 2000 parliamentary elections caused great outrage amongst the IRP members. Many felt that Rahmonov had conducted the elections illegally and manipulated the results in order to thwart their power.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.* pp. 258-260

¹⁵⁵ Kathleen Collins, 'Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia' (hereafter 'Clans'), *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 3, July 2002, p.146

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.* p. 149

2.4 Conclusion

As seen above, every single Central Asian country appeared to have been closer to the road of democratisation in 1991 than they are today. The transition towards democracy has taken a reverse route, and geared the Central Asian countries towards increased authoritarianism. Democratisation appears to have failed in every single country. Since independence, former members of the Soviet nomenklatura have navigated Central Asian politics, and have been unable to let go of certain characteristics of the Soviet political model.

The strength of the Soviet legacy has in some ways made the transition towards democratisation very difficult to accomplish. The fact that all Central Asian leaders were part of the Soviet nomenklatura has made them unable to accept certain reforms, which may threaten their power base. Instead the protection of their power has become the most important and challenging task to maintain. The strong Soviet legacy has been one of the reasons the Central Asian leaders have time and time again turned to Moscow for guidance and assistance. This has consequently made them more susceptible to Russian influences. Increased authoritarianism is also a pattern seen in Russian politics, although in a much milder form. Russia in 1991 was by far more democratically oriented than it is today. It appears that Russia has followed (within limits) Central Asia in the way democratisation has been reversed. The similar political paths both Russia and Central Asia have taken have given Russia increased political influence over the region. Moscow has not challenged in action or in words the governing methods in Central Asia; it places no real pressure on change, reform or democratisation. This accommodating Russian role has become even stronger since the epidemic of coloured revolutions started in Georgia. Central Asian leaders have felt threatened that too much American meddling in their internal affairs may result in changes to the status quo. The Rose, Orange and Tulip revolutions, the events in Andijan and the increasing disapproval of certain regimes by Washington have pushed the Central Asian leaders further into the arms of Moscow. The failure of

democratisation in Central Asia cannot be blamed on Russia's strong political influence but is an indication of Russia's growing role in the region.

The characters of the leaderships have played an essential role in the failure of democratisation. Often their character plays an integral role in the method in which the country is run. Even if these leaderships die or get ousted from power democratisation will still not develop as long as the country is still run by like-minded people, from the same ruling elite. Tribal and clan structures still play a role in contemporary Central Asian politics, these dividing structures need to become less influential and allow for the evolution of a single and united national identity. Until this occurs democratisation will struggle to succeed.

The lack of nationalism and a distinct national identity have also played a role in the failure of democratisation. The Central Asian countries never existed as national entities before their creation by the USSR. This has affected the development of a civil and political society, as experience in these matters is limited. This was very different in former Soviet Republics that had previous experience in nation building. Many of the political parties in Central Asia that claimed to have a democratic or nationalist base never evolved into strong bodies. This was not only a result of the regimes' harsh treatment but also because they did not have a strong popular base. It appeared that the failure of these parties could be attributed to attacks from above and lack of support from below. These parties did not win the hearts and minds of the masses as a result of weak national consciousness. Often these parties were also badly organised with no distinct political path or identity.

The failure of democratisation reveals a lot about the strength of the powers this thesis is concerned with. As mentioned above, Russia's unconditional approval of the nature of the regimes in Central Asia have given it strong political influence over the region. America's political influence cannot be undermined because the Central Asian leaders are now politically orienting themselves closer to Russia. American political involvement in Central Asia entered a new and more serious stage in the post-September 11 era. The American democratisation rhetoric has had positive and negative affects on the political situation of the five countries. No doubt western

backed NGOs, institutions for the development of democracy, education programmes abroad, universities, and support for free media have been better than nothing in pushing for the creation of a civil society and creating the scope for a more free and open political environment.

The promotion of democracy has become the face of American foreign policy, particularly for the Bush Administration, and it is in this light that American political influence appears to be weak, even counter productive. America's competing political influence over Central Asian societies and governments has appeared fragile in comparison to Russia. Washington's support of authoritarian leaders has made them more authoritarian and oppressive, resulting in an upsurge in political Islam. Although the rise of political Islam cannot be blamed on Washington's relationship with some Central Asian regimes, it has contributed to its rise. Therefore, the failure of democratisation has strengthened Islam as a political power. The two powers that have gained the most political influence from the lack of democratisation have undeniably been Russia and Islam. As this thesis shows, competing influences are not only bound to one type of influence, there are other influences, which tilt the balance of the powers.

In order for democratisation to succeed, the population must also be ready to accept it and allow for it to evolve. The Tulip revolution was unable to introduce such changes because there did not appear to be an agenda or understanding of what political change could involve. Democratisation in Kazakhstan does not appear to be profoundly needed. As seen above, people appear to have prioritised stability and economic security. Uzbekistan today has the most unstable regime in the region. Not only is the Karimov regime under pressure externally to introduce reform, it also has to deal with the increasing power of political Islam, which it has helped to create. These external and internal pressures have made Karimov more authoritarian; this is explained in more detail in chapters related to Islam and American influences in Central Asia. Tajikistan's increased authoritarianism is a result of Rahmonov's lack of commitment to reform and increased interest in consolidating power. Even if Rahmonov's policies were more liberal and allowed for the participation of the opposition, Tajik society does not appear ready for democratisation. For example, the creation of a civil society,

and rebuilding the economy in a war-torn country will need time to evolve, in addition to compromising with the Islamic tide in the country. The process of democratisation in Turkmenistan is non-existent. In general, the five Central Asian countries appear to be continuously moving further away from democratisation. Russia appears to have the greatest amount of political influence, in the sense that its influence is by far less threatening to the status quo than the other two influences have the potential to be. It is therefore unsurprising that the regimes of Central Asia are increasingly looking to Russia for support in the face of increasing internal and external demand for change. Democratisation, for the time being, looks to have lost in Central Asia. The Kyrgyz revolution is an example that change will not necessarily be achieved when the present leaders die or if they are replaced. As most scholars writing about democratisation will agree, change needs to come from within society and be allowed to develop slowly.

3.0 Russian Influences in Central Asia since 1991

The aim of this chapter is to examine Russian influences in Central Asia after independence. Before the contemporary period can be approached it is important to discuss the historical legacy between Russia and the people of Central Asia, in particularly during the Soviet era. Although this period has been profoundly researched in the past, it is important to trace certain elements of the Soviet legacy, which give Russia today an advantage in its competing influences over the region.

3.1 Russia's Historical Legacy in Central Asia

3.1.1 The Tsarist Empire and Central Asia

The area known today as Central Asia has been subjected to Russian contact for centuries. Although the Russian Empire did not start its campaigns of encompassing what is now known as Central Asia till the latter half of the nineteenth century, it had already infiltrated into certain parts of this region as early as the seventeenth century. The area that first came in contact with Russian rule was part of modern-day Kazakhstan. As Elizabeth Bacon argues, "Long before the Russian conquest of Tashkent in 1865, the Kazakhs had been subject to strong Russian influences".¹⁵⁷

What is modern-day Kazakhstan in the seventeenth century was divided amongst three hordes: the Great Horde, the Middle Horde and the Small Horde. In spite of their differences and loyalties, there existed a common harmony amongst them, one that could unite them against common enemies. One of the most threatening external groups that the hordes were exposed to were the Kalmuks, who inhabited a state called Dzhungaria. Previously the Kazakhs had discouraged Russian expansion into their territory, but during the wars with the Kalmuks the Russians were asked to intervene and help them in their crisis.¹⁵⁸ This was to have long lasting effects on the Kazakhs and their future. The Kalmuks had also waged a series of raids on Russian towns but

¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth E. Bacon, Central Asia Under Russian Rule: A Study in Cultural Change (hereafter Under Russian Rule), Ithaca, NY, 1966, p. 92

¹⁵⁸ Charles Warren Hostler, Turkism and the Soviets (hereafter Turkism), London, 1957, p. 59

had found these hard to capture; their real success lay with nomadic areas where the Kalmuk offensive was a lot stronger.¹⁵⁹

Russia's security-providing role with the Kalmuks was not the only time the Kazakhs were exposed to direct Russian contact. By the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Cossack fortresses spread from the Irtysh River in the north from Omsk to Semipalatinsk and in the West through Kazakh land finally stopping at the Caspian Sea. Throughout that century the Cossack fortresses continued to spread into the steppe. Therefore, by the time Tashkent was captured, most Kazakhs had been under Russian administrative control for years. The Russian Empire never imposed itself too much on the Kazakh hordes and their leaders; it recognized and respected the Kazakh way of life, in return earning respect and the role of security provider against external forces.¹⁶⁰

Russia's military campaign in Central Asia did not start till 1864. By that date it had captured the cities of Turkistan and Chimkent, while also ending the sovereignty of the Kokand khanate over southern Kazakhstan. On 17 June 1865 Tashkent, not without a struggle, fell to the Russian Empire and subsequently became the centre of Central Asia under its rule.¹⁶¹

After Tashkent the next target was Bukhara in 1868. The Russians had many concerns regarding Bukhara; they feared that it was militarily strong, and were cautious in areas where Islam was a strong force. In reality, the government had greatly exaggerated the strength of the army and the will of the people to resist Russian rule. The Russians had overestimated the level of resistance coming from the Bukharans, who had endured many social and economic difficulties and were ready to rebel against their own authorities.¹⁶² The conquest of Bukhara was soon followed by that of Samarkand, Khokand and finally Khiva. Throughout its campaigns, Russia was able to successfully bring the territories under its control with relatively little resistance. In general the

¹⁵⁹ Michael Khodarkovsky, *The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600-1771*, Ithaca, London, 1992, p. 50

¹⁶⁰ Bacon, *Under Russian Rule*, p. 93

¹⁶¹ Helene Carrere d'Encausse, 'Systematic Conquest, 1865 to 1884' (hereafter 'Systematic Conquest') in Edward Allworth (ed.), *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, New York, London, pp. 132-138

¹⁶² *ibid.* p. 139

khans were mistrusted and treated their people in an oppressive and often ruthless manner, consequently allowing the Russians to capture each khanate with relative ease. By 1875 all the khanates had lost their independence.

The Turkmens were the last group of Central Asians to come under Russian rule. In fact they fought the Russians in a series of bloody battles that finally came to an end in 1885, the most violent of them was the battle of Geok Tepe in 1881. Prior to the conquest of the Turkmens in modern day Turkmenistan (then known as Transcaspia), Central Asia was divided into two sections: the guberniia of the Steppe (Kazakhstan) and the guberniia of Turkestan. In the 1890's the guberniia of Turkestan also included Transcaspia.¹⁶³ The annexation of Kazakhstan and the other four Central Asia countries occurred in two stages. First that of the Steppes, now northwest Kazakhstan, followed by that of Turkestan, now Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. These annexations expanded Russia's frontiers to Persia, Afghanistan and China.¹⁶⁴

The Russian Empire's conduct in both the guberniia of the Steppe and the guberniia of Turkestan differed considerably to that of other colonialist powers towards their subjects. There are two reasons that contribute to this fact. Firstly in many of the occupied regions, Russia was either welcomed to exert its influence for reasons already mentioned, or easily accepted after a wave of resistance. Therefore, Russia was not regarded as a forceful, ruthless occupying power; in a way many other colonialist powers were seen. This is a phenomenon that started at that early stage of Russian and Central Asian history, and still remains vital in the relationship between contemporary Russia and Central Asia.

Certain factors helped with the relatively easy acceptance of Russian rule. One of these factors was the lack of nation states, or even the lack of general nationalism. These concepts did not start to evolve till the very end of the Tsarist regime (the Soviet regime rose at the same time as the tide of nationalism across many parts of the world).

¹⁶³ Carrere d'Encausse, 'Systematic Conquest', p. 157

¹⁶⁴ Geoffrey Wheeler, The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia (hereafter The Modern History), London, 1964, p. 51

Movements such as the Basmachis or Alash-Orda, which were not accommodating to Russian rule, gained momentum.¹⁶⁵ These movements should not be overstated as they never matured, nor developed a sophisticated agenda. Both Russia and Central Asia had been subjected to years of Mongol rule, giving them a shared history even at that early stage. The Russian government was also able to co-exist in peace with the natives because it showed a large degree of religious tolerance towards the Muslim population.¹⁶⁶

The Russian Empire's tolerant attitude also stemmed from the knowledge that they would not be able to effectively run their new territories without help from the local elites. In fact many members of the local elites were even welcomed to join the Russian aristocracy, so long as they carried out the right duties, not even a conversion to Orthodoxy was required. There appeared to be many benefits from co-opting the local leaders, such as their ability to encourage the local soldiers in joining the Russian army. Russia's dependence on the locals eliminated opportunities to show signs of racism.¹⁶⁷

It is important to also point out that Russian rule did not exist completely without resistance. The most violent clashes that the government faced in Central Asia were those of 1916. It was only at this stage that a native intelligentsia started to evolve; the believers in modern national consciousness had developed their ideas from the Jadid ideology. In general this was a time where anti-Russian sentiments reached their peak. Real problems, however, did not manifest until the summer of 1916. Already existing anti-Russian feelings were fuelled when a decree ordering the mobilisation of half a million Central Asian men for military service was passed. This decree ignited a chain reaction of rebellions throughout major areas of the region. The fact these rebellions occurred in a domino pattern and not simultaneously made it a lot easier for the authorities to crush them. The rebellions were crushed in a very brutal manner, and Central Asian casualties were exceedingly high; as a result many Kyrgyz fled to Xinjiang, and Turkmens to Iran. These rebellions did not result in a threat to the

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.* p. 52-3

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.* p. 50

¹⁶⁷ S. Frederick Starr, 'Tsarist Government: The Imperial Dimension' (hereafter 'Tsarist Government'), in Jeremy R. Azrael (ed.), Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices, New York, 1978, p. 19

continuation of Russian rule but a shock to the long-established accommodating attitude between Russia and modern day Central Asia.¹⁶⁸

3.1.2 The Soviet Union and Central Asia

The importance of this sub-section is to show why the Soviet legacy is still so prominent in contemporary Central Asia, and how this has inevitably strengthened some strands of Russian influences today. It is important not to over-emphasize the historical legacy as a reason for Central Asian affinity with Russia today. At the same time certain elements of the historical legacy need to be mentioned.

Shortly after the revolution the Central Asian region was divided into five Republics; hence all the Central Asian countries as we know them today are the creation of the Soviet regime.¹⁶⁹ The aim of the Soviet government was to develop this region so that it could be used for the general advancement of the Soviet Union. It was common knowledge that Central Asia had the potential to make vast contributions to the economy, it was also common knowledge that Moscow would have to commit heavily to the development of Central Asia along Soviet norms in order to help this region reach a level of successful productivity. This proved to be a long and draining mission for the Soviet government, but it also proved to be a mission that would integrate Russians and Central Asians for years, giving them not only a common past but also a similar future.

It was decided that Russian should be introduced in all non-Russian schools as a language equal to the native language for three main reasons. The Central government decided that it was the right time to implement a common language, which was needed in a multi-national state. The knowledge of Russian was to many Central Asians an advantage because it meant they could have advanced training alongside the Russian cadre. Finally in a world with growing tension and suspicion between East and West, a

¹⁶⁸ Seymour Becker, 'The Russian Conquest of Central Asia and Kazakhstan: Motives, Methods, Consequences' (hereafter 'Motives, Methods, Consequences'), in Hafeez Malik (ed.), Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London, 1994, pp. 33-35

¹⁶⁹ Muriel Atkin, 'Religious, National, and other Identities in Central Asia', in Jo-Ann Gross (ed.), Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change, Durham, London, 1992, p. 48

common language for defence reasons was essential.¹⁷⁰ The Soviet government also introduced two other changes to the nature of the native languages; between 1927-30 all five languages were forced to abandon the Arabic script and adopt the Latin alphabet. From the late 1930's to the early 1940's one essential change was further introduced; the Cyrillic script replaced the Latin alphabet.¹⁷¹ This was a major step in the direction of linguistic Russification; Moscow was slowly replacing Islamic and Turkic influences with its own. According to Stephen Blank, "Latinisation served as a way to shatter Muslim unity and lay the groundwork for an eventual turn to Russification".¹⁷² Today as a method to enhance notions of nationalism, Central Asian leaders are promoting a return to the native language. Their policies are proving hard to implement as linguistic Russification has merged with Central Asian national identity.

Nationalism was the enemy of the state, and Great Russian chauvinism was very much feared. Therefore, the Soviet government had the very difficult task of promoting the notion of 'one Soviet people' inevitably based around the Russian national core¹⁷³ while at the same time curtailing Russian nationalism and notions of superiority. Sovietization, therefore, was a form of Russification without Russian nationalism. The non-Russians were expected to adopt the Russian language and accept Russian styled politics and Russo-oriented history, the ethnic Russians also had to accommodate to the fusion of non-Russian elements in the Soviet policy.¹⁷⁴ The continuation of Soviet-styled politics and the Soviet political model in current Central Asian governments (even more so than in Russia) appears to be the result of two factors. The five Central Asian countries, created by Moscow, have never experienced a political system other than the Soviet one. The Soviet system provided more advantages than existed in the nomadic or khanate-based systems, where distribution of resources, economic and

¹⁷⁰ Peter A. Blitstein, 'Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian Schools, 1938-1953', in Ronald Grigor Suny & Terry Martin (eds.), A State of Nations: Empire and Nation Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin, New York, 2001, p. 258

¹⁷¹ John Glenn, The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, 2003 p. 81

¹⁷² Stephen Blank, 'Soviet Re-conquest of Central Asia', in Malik (ed.), Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London, 1994, p.52

¹⁷³ Michael Rywkin, 'Religion, Modern Nationalism and Political Power in Soviet Central Asia', p. 197

¹⁷⁴ Neil J. Melvin, 'The Russians: Diaspora and the End of Empire' (hereafter 'The Russians'), in Charles King & Neil J. Melvin (eds.), Nations Abroad: Diaspora Politics and International relations in the Former Soviet Union, Boulder, Co, Oxford, 1998, p. 33

agricultural development, and education and equal gender opportunities were less common. Secondly, the ruling elites of Central Asia are all part of or very much influenced by the old system of governing. No political figure has been able to properly break away from the old Soviet political system.

The experience of the Tsarist and Soviet rule in Central Asia is not badly seen, especially when compared with other former Republics of the USSR. Most people in Central Asia, particularly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, do not view their contact with Russia, whether during the Tsarist or Soviet periods as a time of invasion, occupation and hardship.¹⁷⁵ They often acknowledge the fact that Moscow provided the people of the region with aspects of modernisation and development, which did not previously exist. Women praise the Soviet era as a time that gave them the opportunity to rise in society and enjoy equal status to men. It is important to highlight certain characteristics of both the Tsarist and Soviet periods as they provide an introduction to certain phenomena that exist in Central Asia today, such as, Central Asian Russification and Soviet-styled political systems.

¹⁷⁵ At the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Department of International Relations in Almaty, November 2005, I interviewed a young ethnic Kazakh lecturer called Karina Narymbetova. She stressed that Tsarist Russia incorporated modern-day Kazakhstan into its empire and she criticised non-Kazakhs when they used the word invaded or occupied. She said that Tsarist Russia saved Kazakhstan by incorporating it into the Russian Empire and providing assistance, and modernisation.

The following sections analyse Russia's cultural, security-related, political and economic influences with each of the five Central Asian countries. As Russia has both internal and external influences in Central Asia, it is first important to trace the evolution of Russian Foreign Policy over the region since independence.

3.2 Patterns of Russian Foreign Policy since the Disintegration of the USSR

As the then Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov wrote, “No state can recreate its foreign policy from scratch simply because of particular domestic political changes, even if such change is profound. Foreign policy objectively reflects the characteristics of how a country- its culture, economy, geopolitical situation- have historically developed, and therefore is a complex alloy, comprising elements of both continuity and renewal”.¹⁷⁶ This is the character of Russian foreign policy today. Russia’s historic development has been linked in many ways, as detailed in the previous section, to that of Central Asia, therefore the quote correctly implies that Russian interests in Central Asia, or in fact anywhere else in its former sphere of influence, have not greatly been altered as a result of the changes in the international arena; they have simply been remodeled to adapt to the current situation. Foreign policy is a reflection of the objectives and interests of the Russian state- the Tsarist Empire, the USSR or the Russian Federation.¹⁷⁷

This attitude, in regards to foreign policy, has not always prevailed in Moscow. The Russian Federation’s foreign policy has not always been a clear-cut equation. Its character is very much different today than it was in the early 1990’s. Russian foreign policy in its early years was very much a reflection, and a reaction to the new world order that came into existence after the end of the Cold War. To add further complications, Russian national identity, similar to Central Asian national identities, had been very much over-shadowed by the Soviet identity. The Central Asians and the Russians were both searching for similar answers in regards to their national identity. Was Russia, similar to Central Asia, going to adopt religion as a pillar of its identity? (All the Central Asian countries have done this to different levels). According to Huntington, “Several scholars distinguish a separate Orthodox civilisation, centered in

¹⁷⁶ Igor S. Ivanov, The New Russian Diplomacy, Washington D.C, 2002, p. 18

¹⁷⁷ Ivanov, The New Russian Diplomacy, p.19

Russia".¹⁷⁸ Or was it going to declare itself a European or an Asian country? Were religion, European-ness and Asian-ness going to be combined to form a unique Russian identity? The latter combination appears to have corresponded with how most Russians regard themselves-Eurasian. O'Loughlin, Tuathail and Kolossov report that, "71% of respondents to the All-Russian Centre for Research and Public Opinion survey held in November 2004 agreed with the statement that Russia belonged to a Eurasian civilisation".¹⁷⁹

In regards to religion, it appears that Russia has taken a diverse approach. Russia is predominantly an Orthodox Christian country, and is primarily thought of as belonging to the Christian world; it must also be emphasized that around 20 million of the Russian population are Muslims. After 11 September, and the American increased presence in Central Asia, Russia felt its influences in the region threatened; it was at this stage that Russia decided to restate its Islamic identity. There appears to be three main reasons behind this decision. The first is the fact that 20 million people are a considerable number of people; therefore Russia should not only be considered a Christian country but also a Muslim one. Secondly, its Eurasian identity by definition should have an Islamic touch to it. This corresponds perfectly with Russia's declarations of being the bridge between West and East-between Christianity and Islam (Kazakhstan also likes to define itself in this way). Thirdly, it is essential for Russia to remain the most powerful competing influence in Central Asia; re-stating its Islamic identity, for example, by acquiring observer status in 2005 at the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has helped it do so. This ultimately puts Russia at a more advantageous position than America, in regards to Central Asia, and also in regards to the rest of the Muslim and Arab world. By doing so, Russia also hopes it will be criticised less over its actions in Chechnya. Being part of an Islamic organisation, or even just an observer, may avoid or at least cushion the wrath of Islamic extremism toward itself.

¹⁷⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, London, New York, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, Singapore, 1998, p. 45

¹⁷⁹ John O'Loughlin, Gearoid Tuathail and Vladimir Kolossov, 'A Risky Westward Turn? Putin's 9-11 Script and Ordinary Russians' (hereafter 'A Risky Westward Turn?'), *Europe-Asian Studies*, vol.56, no.1, January 2004, p. 5

The Eurasian identity over the years has helped pave the way for change in Russian foreign policy. The Eurasianist way of thinking did not manifest itself in policy until the mid 1990's, and especially after the appointment of Primakov as foreign minister. The early years of Russian foreign policy were characterized by pro-western policies; this was the peak of Atlanticism in Russian foreign policy.¹⁸⁰ It was also the time that Central Asia was the most neglected by Russia; one of the main reasons for this was that Russia was still in the process of discovering its national interests.¹⁸¹ It was not until the late Kozyrev period that change in foreign policy was detected. Although the USSR had disintegrated and the Cold War had ended, the sentiment and mistrust between Russia and the West, which had manifested over decades could not disappear so quickly. The West was not as willing to help the 'new' Russia as the 1991 Russian euphoria had hoped for. By 1993 Russia's relationship with the West began to weaken. This was particularly evident with issues such as NATO enlargement and the war in Bosnia.¹⁸² On 24 February 1994, El'tsin re-emphasised the shift in foreign policy when he stated, "A major element of the Russian foreign policy in 1994 will concern relations with the new independent states, which maintain borders with Russia, as well as the comprehensive development of the CIS. This is a sphere of special responsibility and special mutual interests of Russia and its neighbours. This country is bound with them more tightly than any other neighbour. This reality must be taken into account, if we want to retain control over economic and social processes and ensure an acceptable level of security".¹⁸³

Although Russia was in desperate need for economic assistance from the west, it soon became obvious to those in the Kremlin that no partnership could be firmly consolidated so long as the west did not see Russia as an equal partner. This phenomenon would slowly push Russia into realising that its interests still differed to

¹⁸⁰ Nicolai N. Petro and Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State, New York, Harlow, 1997, pp. 99-100

¹⁸¹ Peter Shearman, 'Defining the National Interest: Russian Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics' (hereafter 'Defining the National Interest'), in Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (eds.), The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London, 1997, p. 3

¹⁸² Mike Bowker, Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War, Aldershot, Hants, Brookfield, 1997 p. 205

¹⁸³ Boris El'tsin, Address of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly on the Consolidation of the Russian State (Domestic and Foreign Policy Guidelines), London, 1994, p. 42

those of the west.¹⁸⁴ Moscow started to look back at its former spheres of influence; its main concern was its integrity, security, and economic development. These created the pillars of Russian influences in Central Asia.¹⁸⁵

Igor Ivanov (1998-2004) and Sergei Lavrov (2004-), the two foreign ministers under Putin, have continued conducting foreign policy along a similar path to that of Primakov. Russia today seems to have finally found its place in the international arena, and has a clearer foreign policy agenda. Its concern with Central Asia has slowly been increasing since the mid 1990's, and reached a peak in the post-September 11 era. This has made Central Asia once again a playground for competing powers and influences. Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia's weakened role as a political power in the international arena has often been very obvious. It has consequently made strong efforts to show its distinct imprint on issues that are of global interest, especially if it is able to show a different approach to the one adopted by the USA. This has become evident in Russia's relationship with the government of the Iranian president Mohamed Ahmadinijad and with its helping hand to Hamas. Competition between Russia and the USA is not bound to Central Asia it merely intensifies there.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Mike Bowker, Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War, p. 206

¹⁸⁵ F. Seth Singleton, 'Russia and Asia: The Emergence of 'Normal Relations' in Kanet and Kozhemiakin (eds.), The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, p. 105

¹⁸⁶ The Economist, 'Russia is not a Piece of Furniture', April 22nd-28th 2006, pp.41-42

3.3 Russia's Political Influence in Central Asia

Russia's political influence on the region has already been touched on in the chapter related to the internal politics of Central Asia. Growing similarities between the Russian and Central Asian political systems were identified. Over the years both Russia and Central Asia appear to have reverted back to some of the characteristics of the Soviet political model. The Russian political system seems to be imitating that of some of the Central Asian countries in regards to gradual growing authoritarianism, and the control of the development of civil society. Putin, very much like the Central Asian leaders has geared Russia's politics to consolidate his own power and eliminate opponents.¹⁸⁷ Central Asia's experiment with democracy has been a failure and many will argue that so has Russia's.¹⁸⁸ The steady distancing from most preconditions to democratisation is by far more profound in the Central Asian countries than in Russia. Thus, it is inevitable that Russia's political influences are strong in Central Asia as they will be supportive of the policies taken by the ruling elites.

Even if the foreign policy of the Central Asian countries is not always aligned to Russia, as was particularly the case with Uzbekistan before the Andijan massacre in May 2005, domestic politics has so far (throughout Central Asia) been aligned to Moscow. Most literature on Russian and Central Asian politics and foreign policy discusses the links and similarities between Russian and Central Asian foreign policy but not between Russian and Central Asian domestic politics. This is a point that this thesis highlights. Putin's conduct of politics and that of his counterparts in Central Asia can display a striking resemblance. As Bobo Lo says, "It is somewhat ironic that the post-Soviet era, with its powerful images of democracy and freedom, should give rise to a man (Putin) whose political standing and control over policy exceeds that of more authoritarian figures of the past, such as Khrushchev, Gorbachev and El'tsin".¹⁸⁹ In addition, politician reshuffling is an increasing phenomenon in both Russia and

¹⁸⁷ Masha Lipman and Michael McFaul, 'Putin and the Media', in Dale R. Herspring (ed.), *Putin's Russia*, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 2003, p. 63

¹⁸⁸ Timothy J. Colton and Michael McFaul, 'Putin and Democratisation', in Herspring (ed.), *Putin's Russia*, p. 13

¹⁸⁹ Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, London, 2003, p. 2

Central Asia and guarantees the interests of only the groups in power. This often results in very few changes and reforms being implemented as a result the creation of a police-like state becomes more inevitable.¹⁹⁰ Russia's political influence on all five Central Asian countries is a major challenge to the other two competing powers political influence.

¹⁹⁰ Mikhail Stoliarov, Federalism and the Dictatorship of Power in Russia, London, New York, 2003, p. 138

3.4 Russification in Central Asia

Russification in Central Asia is Russia's cultural influence on the region. When Russification is referred to it often implies linguistic Russification. Linguistic Russification should not be underestimated or overlooked as language forms a core part of a people's identity. The other type of Russification this section examines, I have called 'behavioural' Russification. Behavioral Russification reflects Russia's influence on the mind-set of the Central Asian people. This is revealed in the way the Central Asians dress, what they eat and drink, the general way they perceive themselves and in their national identity. This is a phenomenon distinct to Central Asia, and is hard to research as most of the signs of behavioral Russification are detected by observation. Behavioral Russification has previously been under-researched, aspects of it have been written about but not linked together or identified as a single phenomenon explaining what Central Asian Russification is (other than linguistically) and its degrees in different countries. The following section will analyse the importance and impact of both forms of Russification on Central Asian society.

It is important to point out that although Russification is part of Sovietization it is also distinct from it. As seen above, Russification refers to the Russian language and Russian behaviour. Drinking alcohol, eating pork were not encouraged under the Soviet system, they exist today in Central Asia because they are part of Russian culture. This is an example of Russification and not Sovietization. Sovietization focused on (amongst other things) campaigns against religion, on state ideology, integration of different nationalities, collectivization and state ownership of industry. Therefore a Kazakh who is an atheist is an example of Sovietization but a Kazakh who speaks Russian and drinks vodka is an example of Russification. This section focuses on and gives examples of characteristics of Russification distinct from Sovietization.

In an attempt to limit linguistic Russification and reinforce national consciousness, the Central Asian countries have passed language laws, which put the status of the native language at a higher level to the Russian language, and encourage its use as the official

state language. In some countries these laws have not amounted to much change. In Kazakhstan, for, example, the government has not taken this law very seriously itself. The Russified Kazakh elite still uses Russian officially; they have consequently killed the Kazakh language revival at its very early stages.¹⁹¹ In spite of Nazarbayev's language laws, Kazakhstan is one of the most linguistically Russified Central Asian countries. What has to be observed are not the laws regarding language but the practical implementation of language in society. For example, at the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University only Russian is the teaching language. Outside of class only Russian is used amongst students and teachers. In fact many ethnic Kazakh students admitted not to be comfortable in using the Kazakh language because they were not fluent, and therefore preferred speaking in Russian. Most of them even said that they did not feel the need to improve their fluency in Kazakh because they spoke Russian.¹⁹²

Kazakhstan is one of the most linguistically and behaviorally Russified Central Asian countries. It is in this country that behavioral Russification seemed so strong that it has infiltrated into the Kazakh national identity. Kazakhs will openly speak about the profound level of Russian cultural influence in their country, which affects the behaviour of the population. They argue that Russification is in the hearts and minds of the people, affecting the very core of their national identity. One of the reasons for this, they argue, is because the Kazakhs are still in the process of discovering their own national identity, which they never considered until after independence.¹⁹³ Amongst the more religious strata of the Kazakh population, Islam is seen as an alternative to Russification in filling the vacuum in Kazakh national identity left after the collapse of the USSR. It is only when Kazakhs are in Muslim countries learning more about Islam that they realise how strong the influence of Russification is on them. According to

¹⁹¹ Yilmaz Bingol, 'Nationalism and Democracy in Post-Communist Central Asia' (hereafter 'Nationalism and Democracy'), *Asian Ethnicity*, vol.5, no.1, February 2004, p. 56

¹⁹² This information was gathered during one of two visits to Al-Farabi University. I was allowed to speak to some of the student from the Department of International Affairs and ask them about their own personal experiences and opinions regarding the use of the Russian language in Kazakhstan. Almaty, November 2005.

¹⁹³ This information was gathered while interviewing academics (of all age groups) at the Al-Farabi University in Almaty. One of the Kazakh academics I spoke to even said that she felt more Russian than Kazakh. When asked by her colleague what country she would say she was from when abroad (outside Central Asia) she said Kazakhstan, but before she replied to her colleague's question she hesitated and thought about her answer.

Alima Bissenova, it is then that it “becomes clear to what extent Russian-ness has been internalised and has in fact become an integral part of post-Soviet Kazakh and post-Soviet Muslim identity”.¹⁹⁴ Kazakh Russification is also seen when Kazakhs prefer Russian hospitals or see Russian-educated doctors when they get sick abroad.¹⁹⁵ Russian and Kazakh common perceptions further interlink when it comes to the ideas of the political and cultural movement known as neo-Eurasianism. The Gumilev Eurasian University in Almaty further stresses the importance of Eurasianism for the Kazakhs. According to Trenin, “In terms of ethnicity and prevailing culture, Kazakhstan is a truly Eurasian state”.¹⁹⁶ Russian food chains are more numerous in Kazakhstan than anywhere else in Central Asia; alcohol and pork are accepted as part of Kazakh culture.

In other countries, the language laws have been used as a tool to crack down on other native languages. The Karimov government has launched a campaign banning the teaching of Tajik anywhere in Uzbekistan, and closing down all Tajik schools. This has caused some tension in cities such as Samarkand and Bukhara, where the vast majority of the inhabitants are ethnic Tajiks.¹⁹⁷ In Uzbekistan, Uzbek was made the sole official language; Russian is still widely used, but Uzbek is by far more spoken in both the private and public sectors than Kyrgyz or Kazakh in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. This has consequently made Uzbeks less linguistically Russified than other Central Asians. It is important to point out that although the Uzbeks speak less Russian amongst themselves, most of them can speak Russian.¹⁹⁸ Karimov has also insisted that the use of the Cyrillic script be limited. He wants to re-introduce the Latin script, which he sees as a method to encourage the use of Uzbek. As in Kazakhstan,

¹⁹⁴ Alima Bissenova, ‘Central Asian Encounters in the Middle East: Nationalism, Islam and Post-Coloniality in Al-Azhar’ (hereafter ‘Central Asian Encounters in the Middle East’), *Religion, State & Society*, vol. 33, no. 3, September 2005, pp. 261-262

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 261

¹⁹⁶ Dmitri Trenin, ‘Southern Watch: Russia’s Policy in Central Asia’, *International Affairs*, vol. 56, no.2, Spring 2002, p. 125

¹⁹⁷ This information was gathered from local Tajiks spoken to in Samarkand. Most regarded this move by Karimov as an attempt to limit the influence of the Tajiks in Uzbekistan, who constitute the majority of inhabitants in both Samarkand and Bukhara. Many Tajiks saw this as ethnic discrimination.

¹⁹⁸ This observation was made by spending time in Tashkent and Samarkand. Even in Samarkand, where Tajik was the predominant language used, almost everyone I met could speak Russian.

the theory behind these laws dictating the use of a certain language or alphabet is different to the practice.¹⁹⁹

Behavioral Russification in Uzbekistan is less noticeable at first glance. The Uzbeks are less conscious of it than the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz. In Uzbekistan there exists a sub-conscious Russian-ness. Aspects of behavioral Russification are at times shocking in this country that also exhibits strong Islamic characteristics; women are more conservatively dressed than in Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan, and veils are more frequently seen. Nevertheless, religious men will finish their prayers at a mosque and then drink vodka and eat pork at home with friends and family without the slightest concern regarding the contradictions of both events.²⁰⁰ Even on Uzbekistan's national airlines, pork sandwiches are offered.

Kyrgyzstan, similar to Kazakhstan is very linguistically Russified. Russian is so prominent in all echelons of society that the prime minister-Felix Kulov, who at some point was even considered a candidate for the presidential elections after the Tulip revolution, cannot speak Kyrgyz but only Russian. The use of the titular language, as in all the other Central Asian countries, became an issue of importance after independence. Laws were set that favoured those who could speak the titular language, inevitably causing some concern for the ethnic Russians in Kyrgyzstan.²⁰¹ These laws are not fully implemented, as the example above is evidence of this. The main language used for teaching at the Kyrgyz State National University is Russian, and students outside of class speak Russian to one another and to the staff. The Kyrgyz professors and lecturers (some of them ethnic Russians) only speak Russian at University. Two types of schools exist in Kyrgyzstan; those that educate in Russian and those that educate in Kyrgyz. Parents have the choice of which type of school to

¹⁹⁹ From my experience, most people were unable to read the Latin script. When inquiring for street names, museums, restaurants, and Universities written in the Latin script, people frequently could not understand.

²⁰⁰ Interview with Jamshid Farrukhovich Karimov, Head of International Relations Department at the Tashkent Islamic University, and member of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, September 2004. Karimov said that many Uzbeks, regardless of how religious they are, find it difficult to implement some Islamic principles because vodka and pork have been part of Uzbek culture for decades.

²⁰¹ Vladimir Mesamed, 'Linguistic Policy and the Process of Democratisation in Uzbekistan', in Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, p. 236

send their children to. Both types of school also have language classes in the other language.²⁰²

The Kyrgyz people also exhibit strong signs of behavioral Russification, especially in the north. The way people dress, especially women in Bishkek, is very different to how women dress in other Muslim countries. Veils, long skirts and long sleeves are almost never seen (in summer). Russian music is popular amongst the ethnic Kyrgyz as is Central Asian music amongst the ethnic Russians. There is a great amount of inter-ethnic mixing in Bishkek, where one in three people are ethnically Russian.²⁰³ In parties, restaurants, and discos all Kyrgyz people, including Russians, mix, socialise, drink and dance together. One of Bakiyev's political advisors and former deputy foreign minister is an ethnic Russian; this helps explain the Kyrgyz identity when they feel it is normal to have ethnic Russians in such sensitive political positions.²⁰⁴

In the late 1990's the Turkmen appeared to be the most flexible toward language laws and dual citizenship in regards to Russia. As Bingol says, "Here the language law declared Russian as a state language alongside Turkmen, and Turkmen citizens of Russian origins were granted dual citizenship".²⁰⁵ Russian is still widely used in Turkmen constitutional matters, such as presidential and parliamentary elections as was the case in the latest parliamentary elections on 19 December 2004, where election information, results and all documentation was publicly announced to be available in both Turkmen and Russian.²⁰⁶

Like the other Central Asian countries, the enhancement of the titular language in Tajikistan was given importance. According to the constitution the language of Tajikistan is Tajik, and Russian is the language of inter-ethnic communication.²⁰⁷

²⁰² Interview with Iris Beybutova, Dean, Professor, Kyrgyz State National University: School of International Relations, Bishkek, September 2004

²⁰³ Interview with Iris Beybutova

²⁰⁴ Interview with Yevgenni Kablukov, Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister, September 2004. During my second visit to Kyrgyzstan in November 2005, he told me that he had become one of Bakiyev's political advisors.

²⁰⁵ Yilmaz Bingol, 'Nationalism and Democracy', p.57

²⁰⁶ 'Turkmenistan to Set Up 1,610 Poll Stations for Parliamentary Election', *The Times of Central Asia* (Bishkek), 11.11.04

²⁰⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, Article 2, Dushanbe, 1994

Russian is no longer the language used for conducting official business, while schools are permitted to conduct classes in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek.²⁰⁸ In addition, Russian is the sole language in which the Central Asian countries can communicate with one another.²⁰⁹

Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the least behaviorally Russified Central Asian countries. Both Turkmens and Tajiks are more attached to their customs and culture than seen anywhere else in the region. Tajik dependence on Russia during the civil war and the Rahmonov regime's support from Moscow has made Tajikistan particularly aligned to Russia. Both Niyazov and Rahmonov are from Russified elites. Niyazov showed the most amount of flexibility towards the Russian Turkmens by granting them dual citizenship. This changed in 2003, and the Russian Turkmens had to decide which citizenship they would keep.²¹⁰ Consequently this caused tension with Moscow. Russians throughout Central Asia had more sophisticated, and technical jobs than the rest of the population; therefore discouraging them to remain often affected the functionality of the country.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Language and Ethnicity Issues in Tajikistan, d.d 4.4.06,
http://www.ismaili.net/mirrors/112_tajik/tajkethn.html

²⁰⁹ This is particularly the case for Tajikistan as it is the only non-Turkic language in Central Asia. Its roots come from the Persian language.

²¹⁰ 'Dual Citizenship', Central Asia Newsfile, vol.2, no.1 (15), 1994, p.4

²¹¹ All the internal Central Asian flights that I took had ethnic Russian pilots.

3.5 Russia's Contribution to Central Asian Security

Central Asian security concerns have guaranteed that Russian influences remain strong in the region. The argument that Central Asia, or at least some countries in Central Asia, can replace Russia's role as a security provider with that of the USA (or any other country) remains a sensitive issue, as will be discussed in more detail below. There are certain factors that bond Central Asia and Russia. Russia has national interests and national prestige to protect, and the Central Asian countries have been for years consumers of security from Russia. In terms of security, both Russia and Central Asia need one another. One of the main threats to Russian and Central Asian security is Islamic extremism. By the mid 1990's, Russia was showing concern that the tide of Islamic extremism was gaining momentum, and feared that its power in Central Asia might be challenged and its national security threatened. This was a time when American influences were still weak; the only other potentially threatening force was Islam. As Kulchick says, "The fundamentalist threat has forced the present Central Asian elite to prepare for integration with Russia".²¹²

In regards to security, Russia is responsible for a series of organizations created in order to provide security for the CIS. The creation of the CIS by itself was reassuring for many Central Asian countries as it bound them to Russia, which in the 1990s was the only power willing to invest time and money into Central Asian security. However the main pillar for security in the framework of the CIS was founded in Tashkent in 1992 with the creation of the Collective Security Treaty (CST), whose members by 1993 were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.²¹³ In fact, for some Russian deputies the CST was an organisation purely for the advantage of weak CIS countries that were unable to defend their own national interests, and needed Russia to do so for them. According to Allison, "The agreement could automatically involve Russia in conflicts between the

²¹² Yuriy Kulchick, Andrey Fadin and Victor Sergeev, Central Asia after the Empire, London, Chicago, IL, 1996, p. 46

²¹³ Andrei Zagorski, 'Regional Structures of Security Policy Within the CIS' (hereafter 'Regional Structures'), in Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth (eds.), Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia, London, 1998, p. 281

other signatory states (or in broader conflicts provoked by them) regardless of Russia's own interests".²¹⁴ The main test for collective security came with the eruption of the Tajik civil war in 1992. This was the first incident where it became clear that regional Central Asian security had to include Russia. In terms of regional participation in the Tajik civil war, Russia (Uzbekistan and Iran to a lesser effect) seemed to be the spine of the whole region. Therefore, it is not surprising that Russian influences would endure for long, as Russia in the past has proved willing and capable of providing security.

This was a time where Islam was one of the main sources of instability; at that point the USA did not appear too concerned about Tajikistan. The threat of political Islam spreading in the region and creating security risks for regional and non-regional countries was still not commonly believed. The Tashkent agreement was a form of guarantee that Russia would get directly involved in the problems of Central Asia.²¹⁵ The reluctance of the other Central Asian countries on agreeing to participate in the peacekeeping operation in Tajikistan, by at least guarding the Tajik borders, showed their weakness and lack of willingness to create a purely Central Asian defence system. Instead they opted for dependence on Russian security.²¹⁶ Had it not been for Russia's 201st Motor Rifle Division (MRD), the country might have been taken over by Islamic extremists, and utilized as a safe haven for the Taliban and other extremist movements. Consequently, these movements could have used their position in Tajikistan to launch offensives on the rest of Central Asia, eventually reaching Russia. This is when Russian security and Central Asian security become part of the same issue.

Internal tension between Central Asian countries, weak political infrastructure and lack of experience and initiative has resulted in an inability to create meaningful regional security organisations that do not include Russia. The Central Asian Union-Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, which later evolved into the Central Asian

²¹⁴ Roy Allison, 'The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South' (hereafter 'The Military and Political Security'), in Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov, and Ghia Nodia (eds.), Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment, Armonk, NY, London, 1999, p. 40

²¹⁵ Zagorski, 'Regional Structures', p. 287

²¹⁶ *ibid.* p. 288

Economic Union in 1998, took the initiative in 1995 to create a joint Council of Defence Ministers in order to deal with regional security issues. The result was the creation of Centrasbat, which will be discussed in detail in the chapter concerning American influences in the region. Centrasbat was neither used in the Tajik civil war, nor in countering threats from Afghanistan. In essence, this organisation is nothing but a false facade of Central Asian regional security initiative. In general, regional organisations in the CIS have proved to be less efficient than expected. Purely Central Asian organisations have proved to be even more ineffective as each country has chosen its own path with little attention paid to its neighbours or the region. Although the Central Asian countries belong to a wide range of organisations related mainly to security and economic objectives, the vast majority of them (especially the ones that are the most effective) are either Russian initiatives or shared Russian initiatives.²¹⁷

The Central Asian countries attempted to work together, without the participation of Russia or any other non Central Asia country prior to 11 September, in fighting terrorism, extremism and transnational organised crime. Regional cooperation was destroyed when growing suspicion between all Central Asian countries, especially between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan erupted over the issue of joint military actions. At the Central Asian Economic Community summit in 2000, all four leaders (Niyazov not included) abandoned what little hope they had for Central Asian regional security and self-dependence, and proceeded to invite Russia in their anti-terrorism agreements and asked the CIS Collective Security Council to guide them in defeating the terrorist threat.²¹⁸

The CIS anti-terrorist centre (ATC) located in Tashkent is another Russian initiative aimed at countering Islamic militant groups and narcotic trading; the center is headed by the Russian Federal Security Services. The escalation of tension prior to 11 September (in regards to narcotics trafficking and the general threat from Islamic extremists especially from the Taliban) led to the creation, in May 2001, of a Collective Rapid Deployment Force (RDF), with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

²¹⁷ Annette Bohr, 'Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order' (hereafter 'New Geopolitics'), *International Affairs*, vol.80, no.3, May 2004, p. 489

²¹⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Inside Central Asia*, no. 338, 14-20 August 2000, no. 339, 21-27 August 2000

Tajikistan, Armenia and Belarus as members. It was with the help of the ATC in Bishkek that the RDF was established; the RDF is a security force based on battalions from each of the participating countries; the first live military exercise was held in October 2001 in Kyrgyzstan.²¹⁹ According to Khachatrian, “The creation of rapid deployment forces marks a potential watershed for the Collective Security Treaty, which is striving to carve out a far reaching role as a security organisation”.²²⁰

The events of 11 September have in many aspects strengthened the resolve of Russia and the Central Asian countries to create a stronger counter-terrorism shield. Consequently they have tried to form a stronger CIS Collective Security System; in May 2002 the Collective Security Treaty became the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) encompassing Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus and Armenia. Uzbekistan had left the CST in 1997, and jointed the pro-American alliance known as GUUAM. The CST and the CSTO have the same goal, which is to create a regional security organisation. However, the CSTO has molded itself to adapt to the changes that have occurred in the international system since 11 September. The aims of the CST were to guarantee regional security- under the supervision of Russia. The CST did not only seek to protect the region from external threats, but also to protect members of the CST from one another. This was of huge importance to the weaker countries of Central Asia. What the treaty did not mention was what measures would be taken in case the member countries had to fight Islamic insurgents, religious extremism and separatism. These were major weaknesses of the CST, weakness that the CSTO has tried to deal with.²²¹

The CSTO has a joint military battalion in Moscow, one defence system, and coordinated maneuvers in foreign, security and defence matters. According to Allison, “ Even if these goals are only partially achieved, Russia is dominant in the CSTO and

²¹⁹ Vitaly V. Naumkin, ‘Russian Policy Towards Kazakhstan’, in Robert Legvold (ed.), Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asia Nexus, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2003, p. 60

²²⁰ Haroutiun Khachatrian, ‘Creation of Rapid Deployment Force Marks Potential Watershed in Collective Security Treaty Development’, Eurasianet.org, d.o 30.5.01, d.d 20.11.04, <http://www.eurasianet.org/department/insight/articles/eav053001.shtml>

²²¹ Murad Esenov, ‘The Anti-Terrorist Campaign and the Regional Security System’ (hereafter Anti-Terrorist Campaign’), Central Asia and the Caucasus Press, <http://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/esenov-anti-terror-campaign-IISS.shtml>

evidently hopes that the system will enhance Moscow's standing as a 'security manager' for Central Asia".²²² The Central Asian members are much more enthusiastic about the CSTO than they were about the CST, this is due to the extent of Russian-provided benefits they achieve as a result of their membership. What these countries seek is military-technical cooperation with Russia. The armies of each of the Central Asian (and the non-Central Asian countries) member countries are in desperate need for new modern weapons and communication technology. Membership in the CSTO will allow them to purchase arms and technology at Russian prices.²²³ Moscow hopes that the CSTO will be able to launch large-scale military activity²²⁴; this was achieved in August 2004 in Kyrgyzstan days after the suicide bombings in Tashkent of the Israeli and American embassies and the State Prosecutor's office. The organisation's position was elevated when on 23 December 2003 the procedure of registration of the statute of the CSTO with the secretariat of the UN was completed. According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, "This important event in the life of the CSTO member states is evidence of the recognition by the world community of the role and place of the CSTO in the matters of safeguarding regional and international security and stability".²²⁵

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), including the four Central Asian countries (Turkmenistan excluded) China and Russia, is another regional organisation aimed at providing security for Central Asia (and its other two members). Before discussing the role of the SCO it is important to trace its origins in the Shanghai Five (S5). The character of the SCO has very much developed since it was the S5, as has its agenda. The origins of the S5 can even be traced back to the Soviet era, when in 1989, border negotiations were discussed between China and the Soviet Union. In 1992 negotiations started on a bilateral basis, therefore, border issues where the foundations

²²² Roy Allison, 'Strategic Reassertion in Russia's Central Asia Policy', *International Affairs*, vol. 80, no.2, March 2004, p. 286

²²³ Esenov, 'The Anti-Terrorist Campaign'

²²⁴ 'Putin to Attend Summit of Collective Security Treaty Organisation', *Pravda*, d.o 26.4.03, d.d 29.11.03, <http://newsfromrussia.com/main/2003/04/26/46410.html>

²²⁵ 'Collective Security Treaty Organisation Statute Registered with the United Nations Secretariat', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation: Information and Press Department, d.o 8.1.04, d.d 23.11.04, http://www.in.mid.ru/brp_4

of this regional organisation.²²⁶ The S5, was not formally created until 1997²²⁷, its members were Russia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and China. Uzbekistan did not become part of this organisation till June 2001 (more on Uzbekistan joining the SCO below). This organisation is not a purely Russia initiative, China has a large role; its role appears to be even more important than that of Russia. An indication of this is that the SCO's secretariat is based in Beijing. Russia's role, however, should not be belittled, not only is Russia affected by many of the issues concerning the SCO (and previously the S5), but also the participation of Russia has encouraged the Central Asian countries to join. Any regional organisation involving China and only the Central Asian countries would have appeared to be weakening Russia's influences in the region and signifying Chinese dominance, consequently antagonising Russia. This would be disadvantageous to China, which wants to create a strong alliance in the face of other powers in the region, such as Islam and the USA. In addition, China (for the time being) has officially repeated that with regards to Russia, it is not a competitor but a partner.²²⁸

The first agenda of the S5 involved limiting military activities in a 100 km frontier zone, fighting trade in narcotics, creating an ATC in Bishkek and cooperating in economic issues, mainly to the advantage of China.²²⁹ The S5 experienced its first wave of evolution in August 1999 at the Bishkek summit. This meeting occurred after the Tashkent bombings of 1999, and during the same month as the first IMU incursion on Kyrgyzstan; not surprisingly the S5 focused its future role on fighting religious extremism, separatism and narcotic trading. At this summit all the leaders agreed that combating terrorism was of primary importance to the stability of the entire region.²³⁰ These concerns became critical during a time where the Taliban resembled a profound

²²⁶ Richard W. X. Hu, 'China and Central Asia: The Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation' (hereafter 'China and Central Asia'), in Boris Rumer and Lau Sim Yee (eds.), Central Asia and South Caucasus Affairs, Tokyo, 2003, pp. 52-53

²²⁷ It is interesting to point out that this organisation was called after an important Chinese city that is far from Central Asia and Central Asian problems. This can be interpreted as a signal that Central Asia is important to China, but not of primary concern. There is another side to China that is very much distant from Central Asia in terms of security and religious concerns, in addition to profound cultural diversity.

²²⁸ Interview with Zhou Xiuhua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Syrian Arab Republic, Damascus, September 2005

²²⁹ E. Wayne Merry, 'Moscow's Retreat and Beijing's Rise as Regional Great Power' (hereafter 'Moscow's Retreat'), Problems of Post-Communism, vol.50, no.3, May/June 2003, p. 25

²³⁰ Hu, 'China and Central Asia', p. 55

security threat to all the countries involved in the S5. Russia was concerned that the growing role of the Taliban would further fuel Chechen separatism, China was concerned with the Uighur separatists in Xinjiang, and the Central Asians knew that the IMU had used Afghanistan as a safe-haven before launching its strikes. It appeared in everyone's interest to put a limit to the Taliban threat. The new agenda of the S5 was an attempt to achieve this (in practice the S5 was completely powerless in the face of the Taliban). At this summit security was such a serious concern (especially for Central Asia) that Uzbekistan was invited, especially as the IMU was an Uzbek Islamic movement, primarily aimed at the Uzbek government. "The Shanghai Five invited Uzbekistan to participate as an observer with the intention of extending their cooperation beyond border issues to include broad diplomatic initiatives including security cooperation against Taliban-inspired insurrectionism".²³¹

It was not until the Shanghai summit in June 2001 that the S5 underwent its final stage of evolution. The S5 became the SCO; this time Uzbekistan was a full-fledged member. The reasons for this were related to Uzbekistan's concern with the growing threat of extremism, the disappointment with other regional security organisations such as GUUAM, and the financial benefits that Uzbekistan could receive from China as a result of its participation. Since Uzbekistan's involvement in the SCO, President Hu Jintao has signed numerous agreements with Karimov (and other Central Asian leaders) related to technical, economic, and financial cooperations and investments.²³² It is important to remember that the creation of the SCO occurred before 11 September; although this organisation today does resemble an instrument by which Russia and China are able to limit and challenge growing American influences, it was not created on this basis.²³³ Its main challenge at that time came from Islamic extremism, and the Taliban; therefore the SCO was designed to fight a competing influence in the region, an influence that looked to be a direct challenge to the authority and security of all the countries in the SCO. Today the SCO has two challenges to fight, that of Islamic extremism and increased American influences. "The

²³¹ Gregory Gleason, 'The Politics of Counterinsurgency in Central Asia' (hereafter 'Counterinsurgency'), *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.49, no.2, March/April 2002, p. 11

²³² Frank Ching, 'China Boosts Ties with Central Asia', *New Straits Times-Malaysia News Online*, d.o 24.6.04, d.d 2.11.04,

http://www.nst.com.my/Current_News/NST/Thursday/Columns/20040624080705/Article

²³³ Hu, 'China and Central Asia', pp. 51 and 57

SCO, as well as the Russo-Chinese strategic partnership, are sometimes described as tools to foster the concept of a multi-polar world intended to offset perceived US global domination".²³⁴ The SCO's main aims are fighting (what it calls the 'three evils') terrorism, separatism and extremism. Like Russia and Uzbekistan, China has also played the 'Islamic extremist' card after 11 September, as an excuse or justification for its treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang. The SCO provides a level of cooperation and understanding, which not only allows China to have more control of its own Uighurs, but also of the Uighurs in Central Asia. It is estimated at around one million Uighurs live in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. China wants to guarantee that the entire region works together in fighting a threat that can very easily spread from one country to another and challenge the political and economic environment of the region.²³⁵

The SCO appears to be another organisation binding Russia in the sphere of security to Central Asia. "It is a cooperation mechanism based on the two wheels of security and economy, of which security is primary".²³⁶ In many aspects the idea behind the creation of the CSTO and the SCO is similar. However, the CSTO and the SCO have differences. Russia likes to think of the CSTO and not the SCO, as the main security provider for Central Asia, although the SCO prominence and importance in the region is growing and outdoing that of the CSTO.²³⁷ The method in which the SCO tries to provide security is very much different to that of the CSTO. The CSTO is more a military oriented organisation than the SCO. It has military operating organs, and a joint military force, which is trained to deal with extremism and terrorism. "The concept of the CSTO is aimed more at repulsing a military attack, whereas the SCO is

²³⁴ Akihiro Iwashita, 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its Implications for Eurasian Security: A New Dimension of Partnership After the Post-Cold War Period' (hereafter 'A New Dimension'), in Shinichiro Tabata and Akihiro Iwashita (eds.), Slavic Eurasia's Integration into the World Economy and Community-Slavic Eurasian Studies 2, Tokyo, 2004, p. 259

²³⁵ Merry, 'Moscow's Retreat', p. 25

²³⁶ Huasheng Zhao, 'Security Building in Central Asia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation' (hereafter 'Security Building'), in Shinichiro Tabata and Akihiro Iwashita (eds.), Slavic Eurasia's Integration into the World Economy and Community-Slavic Eurasian Studies 2, Tokyo, 2004, p. 311

²³⁷ The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan-K.K Tokaev, at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, speaking about 'Kazakhstan in the Context of the Geo-Politics of the Caspian', mentioned the importance of the SCO in regards to security before he mentioned the CSTO. This shows the growing importance of the SCO in the region. London, 9 March 2006

oriented to preventing new threats to security”.²³⁸ The other purpose of the SCO is that it brings the two most powerful regional countries together. It unites them in the face of any unwanted guests in the region. This characteristic of the SCO did not evolve until after 11 September, and the entrance of additional competing influences into the Central Asian arena. This characteristic has given the SCO added strength, especially when its members (mainly Russia and China) make political statements and declaration that are then implemented, such as not wanting foreign troops and bases (American) on Central Asian soil. The result of this declaration was followed by an American withdrawal from Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan and a statement by Bakiyev (this came to nothing) considering closing the American military base in Manas (this point has been discussed in more detail in the chapter concerning American influences in Central Asia). Before the USA’s increased interference in the region, the main competing influences were from Russia and Islam; China was evolving its influences. Had 11 September not occurred then China could have developed into the third power in the new great game. Today China cannot (does not want to) challenge Russia over Central Asia when there is a more threatening force that has to be controlled. Although the Atasu-Alashankou pipeline-connecting Kazakhstan to China is at times seen as a threat to Russia’s energy control of the region, it has neither been portrayed by the Chinese government nor interpreted by the Russian one as part of a strategy to push Russia out of the Kazakh energy market.²³⁹ So long as the USA remains in the region, China will not threaten Russia’s role; the focus will be for Russia and China to work together in marginalising the role of the USA. The SCO is a vital platform for such an operation.

Russia has also offered protection or at least mediation between weaker Central Asian countries from stronger ones. The country most feared by its neighbours is Uzbekistan. According to Celeste Wallander, “Eurasia’s countries are surrounded by unattractive

²³⁸ Erlan Karin, ‘The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its Implementations for Central Asia’, in Shinichiro Tabata and Akihiro Iwashita (eds.), *Slavic Eurasia’s Integration into the World Economy and Community-Slavic Eurasian Studies 2*, Tokyo, 2004, p. 322

²³⁹ Sergei Blagov, ‘Russian Oil to Flow to China even before Pipeline Completed’, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, d.o 1.5.06, d.d 20.5.06, http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371037

neighbours, would-be hegemons and war-torn states, including one another”.²⁴⁰ Russia in many ways acts as a limiting force to Uzbek hegemony; Kyrgyzstan specifically favoured this kind of Russian involvement after the Uzbek authorities violated Kyrgyz sovereignty and launched attacks on Kyrgyz territory against Islamic insurgents in 1999/2000, without first taking permission from the Kyrgyz government. The domestic instability in Uzbekistan has thus affected the stability and security of its neighbours.²⁴¹ Uzbekistan has insisted in the past, that both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan were partially responsible for the success of the IMU in launching attacks on the Uzbek government by being able to use both countries as safe havens and transit locations.²⁴² Karimov has often showed disrespect, and tried to intimidate the leadership in Kyrgyzstan by insulting Akayev on Uzbek radio and television, which is received by hundreds of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks living in the Kyrgyz part of the Ferghana Valley.²⁴³ Internal Central Asian tension is certainly prominent; in many aspects Uzbekistan and not Russia is regarded as the hegemonic power in Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstan, reactions to events in Uzbekistan are often analysed with suspicion, even a touch of resentment. A Kyrgyz view was that it was unfortunate for Uzbekistan that its relationship with Russia was not as good as Kyrgyzstan’s relationship with Russia.²⁴⁴

After 11 September, and the American led campaign in Afghanistan, the Central Asian countries appeared even more divided in their support for Russia and the USA. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, being more inclined to Russia in their domestic and foreign affairs, did not threaten to change the geo-political balance of the region. However, as explained in the introduction, even these two countries did not like to be seen by the USA as too supportive of Russian influences as they still wanted to maintain benefits arising from American influences (as previously explained, this is

²⁴⁰ Celeste A. Wallander, ‘Silk Road, Great Game or Soft Underbelly? The New US-Russian Relationship and Implications for Eurasia’ (hereafter ‘Silk Road’), Journal of SouthEast European and Black Sea Studies, London, vol.3, no.3, Sept 2003, p. 98

²⁴¹ Lena Jonson, ‘Russia and Central Asia’, in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context, Washington, D.C, 2001, p. 112

²⁴² Eugene Huskey, ‘An Economy of Authoritarianism? Askar Akaev and Presidential Leadership in Kyrgyzstan’, in Sally N. Cummings (ed.), Power and Change in Central Asia, London, New York, 2002, p.88

²⁴³ *ibid.* pp. 88-89

²⁴⁴ Interview with Iris Beybutova

how influences interlink). According to the Kyrgyz deputy foreign minister in 2004, Akayev did not want to look like he was favouring one power over the other.²⁴⁵ Karimov's re-vitalized relationship with Washington after 11 September re-instated America's security-related influence, consequently re-awakened other Central Asian countries fears of increasing Uzbek prominence in the region. This at times resulted in pushing other Central Asian countries further into Russia's arms for reassurance. According to Bohr, "While all five Central Asian states have been attempting to use the renewed rivalry between Russia and the United States, which is being played out in the Central Asian region, to maximize their strategic and economic benefits, the formation of the United States-Uzbekistan strategic partnership has increased the resolve of the other Central Asian states to balance Uzbekistan's preponderance by enthusiastically pursuing regional projects involving Russia and, to a lesser extent China".²⁴⁶

Competing influences between Russia and the USA are not only limited to Central Asia, but to other parts of the CIS. Russia's loss of influence and mediating power (often to the USA) in most of the Middle East has been a painful experience, one that Russia does not wish to be repeated in the CIS.²⁴⁷ Pravda's reaction to the Ukrainian elections was that the west was meddling in other country's politics, and backing their puppet candidate.²⁴⁸ The reaction from Central Asian leaders, after the results of the original Ukrainian elections, sheds light on the relationship between each Central Asian country and the two powers in question. All the leaders (other than Niyazov, who does not like to get involved in any issue not related to Turkmenistan) supported Yanukovich. This highlights their support for Russia's political influence in the CIS. Even Karimov was supportive of Yanukovich's victory.²⁴⁹ Karimov's pro-American foreign policy did not appear to stop him from backing Russia in domestic political

²⁴⁵ Interview with Yevgenni Kablukov, September 2004

²⁴⁶ Annette Bohr, 'New Geopolitics', International Affairs, p. 489

²⁴⁷ Loss of influence in the CIS would be a terrible blow to Russian prestige, by far more devastating than loss of influence in the Middle East, which always (in theory) was part of the non-alignment movement, in addition to being very much culturally different and geographically distant.

²⁴⁸ Timothy Bancroft Hinchey, 'The OTPOR Factor in the Ukraine: Interference in the Internal Affairs of the CIS', Pravda, http://english.pravda.ru/mailbox/22/101/399/14629_ukraine.html, d.o. 23.11.04, d.d. 24.11.04

²⁴⁹ Shamil Baigin, 'Central Asia Hails Yanukovich as Leader', Reuters, d.o 26.11.04, d.d 2.12.04, <http://www.reuters.co.uk/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=628063>

issues regarding the CIS. Islam has, to a certain extent, helped defuse the tension between the USA and Russia; Islamic extremism is a uniting threat for both Russia and the USA. It is in both their interest to fight extremism. According to Peshkov, “Russia and the US are facing a common enemy in international terrorism”²⁵⁰ At the same time Islam has a multi-dimensional role, it can either make American influences more popular, as America is seen as the main fighter in the war against terror, or unite anger against American hegemony (war against terror is often seen as a war against Islam). Therefore, Islam has the ability to effect how the influences of the other two powers are perceived, especially the American one.

It appears that Russia remains more favoured as a security provider by the Central Asian elites than the USA. It does not threaten to alter the domestic political scene in the Central Asian countries, which is of concern to the leaderships. As seen above, Russia’s political system is more aligned to that of Central Asia than America’s and therefore does not threaten the status quo. The governments of Central Asia perceive American political influence in Central Asia as unaccommodating and risky. According to Kablukov, “The Americans are from a different planet”.²⁵¹ This consequently affects Washington’s security providing role. Security organisations with Russian participation are the most effective in Central Asia. This does not mean that these organisations are particularly successful. There exists a general lack of regional security organisations; most agreements concerning security and the economy are done on a bilateral basis. This is not always very effective as security is a regional issue. In addition, Russia is a regional country itself and its national security is affected by instability in Central Asia. It is important to remember that Washington provided the most important security-providing role in the region in the post-independence era. America’s campaign in Afghanistan, and consequent toppling of the Taliban regime, alleviated one of the region’s most troubling concerns. This gave America increased influence over other spheres concerning Central Asia, consequently fuelling competition over the region.

²⁵⁰ Maksim Peshkov- Russia’s envoy to Tajikistan, ‘The US Ambassador to Tajikistan Visits Russian Military Base’, The Times of Central Asia (Bishkek), 11.11.04

²⁵¹ Interview with Yevgenni Kablukov

3.6 The Role of Central Asia in the Security of the Russian Federation

In 3.5 security concerns between Russia and Central Asia were analysed, but the security issues discussed focused on Central Asia being a security consumer and Russia a security provider. This section does not focus on Central Asian security but on Russian security. The main questions asked in this section are: why is it essential for Russia's security interests, and therefore national interests, to remain profoundly influential in Central Asia? How is Russian security linked with the Central Asian countries? It can be said that the Central Asian countries are security stabilisers for Russia, or even passive security providers. They do not actively provide for security, as Russia does for them. However, in regards to the main security threat, which is Islamic extremism, instability in Central Asia is a serious security threat to Russia. This is a point which Shireen T. Hunter emphasises when she says "the Islamic factor, especially the fear of Islamic extremism and its destabilizing potential, has played a key role in shaping Russian policies towards these regions, particularly Central Asia".²⁵² She also says, "Russian policy toward Central Asia since 1992 has been influenced by economic and political interests, as well as a genuine fear of the rise of Islamic extremism and its impact on Russian security".²⁵³

It is in Russia's interest to guarantee that the Central Asian countries remain immune from Islamic extremism. If Islamic extremism was to further develop and become a political force in any of the Central Asian countries, then the entire region could be affected, including Russia. In addition, if an Islamic force were to triumph in Central Asia, then this would further complicate Russia's role in Chechnya. This section is therefore also concerned with the links between Chechen Islamic extremists and extremism found in Central Asia. It is in Russia's interest to prevent the formation of a joint regional Islamic force that could include Central Asian groups and Chechens. Stability for Russia and Central Asia is part of the same equation.

²⁵² Shireen T. Hunter, *Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security* (hereafter *Islam in Russia*), Armonk, NY, London, 2004, p.327

²⁵³ *ibid.*

The role of the ethnic Russian minorities living in Central Asia, especially in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan will also be discussed. The main question asked here will be: how important is the role of the ethnic Russians in guaranteeing that Russia maintains a large presence in Central Asia? This section will also look at the importance of Central Asia in providing for Russia an image of continued power and importance. Russia's role in the international arena often appears dwarfed by the USA. Russia does not want to see this also happen regionally. Central Asia is one of the last places Russia can still portray its might and strength. This section will also examine the relationship between Russia and its Islamic ally and neighbour, Iran. This will aid in explaining how Russia's relationship with Islam and Muslim countries is very much different to that of the USA's. Although both countries are fighting Islamic extremism, they appear to be fighting different forces and have different enemies and different agendas. Security-related issues, and the links between Islamic extremism and Chechen extremism will first be discussed.

Before discussing the links or potential links between Chechen separatists and Central Asian extremists it is first important to briefly discuss the actual conflict between Russia and Chechnya. The conflict has resulted in a scenario where Chechen and Central Asian extremists could create a common security threat to Russia. The failed August putsch in 1991 triggered the Soviet Republics to declare independence. This included the Central Asian Republics and the Chechen Autonomous Republic. According to Gorbachev, "not content with the breakup of the fifteen former Soviet Republics, which in and of itself was a huge historical shock, leaders and activists in several autonomous regions undertook the much more dangerous project of further disintegration of the country".²⁵⁴ The Chechen-Ingush ASSR had been incorporated into Russia since 1924. Throughout the Soviet period this region had continuously been volatile, and armed confrontation between the centre and the Chechen people never seemed to cease.²⁵⁵ The independence of the Soviet Republics in 1991 was something that Russia could not, and did not want to halt, especially as Russia itself

²⁵⁴ Foreword by Mikhail S. Gorbachev, in Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2004

²⁵⁵ Ivan Rybkin, *Consent in Chechnya. Consent in Russia*, Moscow, 1998, p.32

had declared sovereignty in June 1990. For Moscow, the loss of the Chechen-Ingush region was a completely different issue to the loss of the Republics. This was part of Russia; losing it would not only mean the possibility for the further disintegration of Russia (as other autonomous regions might follow), but also the loss of Russian prestige and pride. It is also essential to mention that the Chechen-Ingush region is rich in natural resources, and a vital pipeline transit route for oil and gas coming into Russia from other areas of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, the loss of this region also has economic implications. For example, the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline has been affected the most by the conflict; this pipeline crosses through Chechnya before reaching Novorossiisk. Many Chechens believe that one of the main reasons the Russians are ready to fight for Chechnya lies in the sphere of pipeline politics.²⁵⁶

In September 1991, General Dzhohar Dudayev who was the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Congress of the Chechen People announced the deposition of the Supreme Soviet of the Chechen-Ingush Republic. Two months later Dudayev declared that the Chechen Republic had become a sovereign state. Moscow did not recognise the newly elected Chechen president or the newly created Chechen parliament. The situation between Chechnya and Moscow slowly became worse. The Russian authorities at that early stage had no desire to send their troops into Chechnya. Instead, El'tsin, the President of the RSFSR, declared a state of emergency following what he called the illegal Chechen elections. This was also a time when the El'tsin-Gorbachev rivalry was at its peak, and the country (and the world) was trying to come to terms with the new political situation that resulted from the disintegration of the USSR. These preconditions may have encouraged Dudayev to pursue his own agenda for Chechen independence. Dudayev's independent Chechnya was not stable. Violence and crime increased, as did ethnic discrimination towards everyone not Chechen, especially if they were Russian. Consequently, the social conditions degenerated, resulting in an economic crisis. Chechnya began to resemble what is often referred to as a 'failed state'.²⁵⁷ It was up to Dudayev to maintain control in what was appearing to be an uncontrollable situation.

²⁵⁶ Sergey Zhiltsov, 'Russia in the Caspian', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, no. 4(28), 2002, p.57

²⁵⁷ Valery Tishkov, *Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society*, London, 2004, p.65

Growing opposition to Dudayev, and numerous failed attempts to oust him from power intensified Russia's resolve to turn to military action. Another important reason for going to war was the desire of the hard-liners around El'tsin for a 'small victorious war' in order to boost the president's popularity. The result was the first Chechen war, which lasted from 1994-96. Russia's Chechen campaigns have not only caused concern amongst the west and the USA, but also amongst many of Russia's Muslim friends and allies. The main threat for Russia is that the Chechen separatists have used Islam as a major political tool for their cause. This may have had the effect of not only causing an Islamic backlash amongst Russia's own Islamic population, but also drawing in foreign Muslim fighters from neighbouring countries. When Russia invaded Chechnya with around 23,800 army soldiers and 4,700 interior ministry troops, Russian soldiers were told that their work in Chechnya was for the protecting of Russian integrity. Dudayev equally inspired his men with similar talk of pride and national duty.²⁵⁸ In such situations Islam plays a profound mobilising and invigorating role. Invasion, by what is perceived as a foreign occupying force, is one of many conditions that have the capability to politicise Islam. Islam offers a unity of purpose in front of a common threat or enemy.

Under the terms of the Khasavyurt agreement in August 1996, Chechnya became independent; the Kazakh-born Aslan Maskhadov became the new president (Dudayev had been killed). From 1996 to 1999, the Republic plunged into further chaos and anarchy, encouraging Russia once more to intervene. For Putin, the second Chechen war was about safeguarding Russia's pride, and avoiding a repetition of the Yugoslav syndrome in the Russian Federation. Chechnya in his eyes was the potential start for the disintegration of Russia.²⁵⁹ Putin said in support of the decision to launch a second Chechen campaign, "I was convinced that if we didn't stop the extremists right away, we'd be facing a second Yugoslavia on the entire territory of the Russian Federation-the Yugoslavization of Russia".²⁶⁰ Putin even warned that instability in Chechnya could lead to instability in other Muslim former Soviet Republics, such as Kyrgyzstan

²⁵⁸ Robert Seely, *Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800-2000*, London, Portland, OR, 2001, p. 225-226

²⁵⁹ Henry E. Hale and Rein Taagepera, 'Russia: Consolidation or Collapse?', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 54, no.7, 2002, p.1102

²⁶⁰ Vladimir Putin, *First Person*, London, 2000, p.141

and Uzbekistan.²⁶¹ It appears he was referring to the threat of Islamic extremism. He mentions Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan specifically because of the 1999 Tashkent bombings, and the IMU's incursions into Kyrgyzstan aimed at the destruction of the Karimov regime in Uzbekistan.

The first Chechen war seems to have been more of an issue of nationalism, and the right of Chechen self-determination. The second Chechen war has a different character; it has become far more Islamicised than the first. Islam has been far more widely used as a political tool to add further cause to the Chechen demands of separatism. By 1999, Islam was starting to be seen as a major destabilising power in the region, which could not be confined to boundaries. The threat that Islamic extremism could sweep across the Islamic territory of the FSU was becoming more and more probable. Today Putin talks about Russian military action in Chechnya as part of an anti-terrorist operation. This style of language is very much in tune with the language used by the American administration. Since September 11, and the American campaign in Iraq, the USA's criticism regarding Russia and Chechnya has become softer. However, this does not mean that both countries see eye to eye in the war against terror. As will be seen below, the Russian government's idea of terrorism, and countries that harbour and sponsor terrorism is very much different to that of the American administration. At the same time, the explosion of two Russian civilian aircrafts in August 2004, and the Beslan school incident in September 2004, have only highlighted that Russia has serious security concerns in regards to Islamic extremism.

Religious opposition, especially the Islamic type, has the ability to draw Islamic fighters from across the region. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Islamic elements in the two Chechen wars, the Tajik civil war or any other Islamic extremist act in Central Asia are either already interlinked or have the potential of becoming one strong regional force if not dealt with correctly. Chechen extremists have even found their way into Kazakhstan, one of the least Islamicised Central Asian countries. According to Vladimir Bozhko, the deputy chairman of the Kazakh National Security Committee, "Kazakhstan has extradited a number of alleged Chechen militants to

²⁶¹ Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's Choice*, London, New York, 2004, p.171

Russia after they were found hiding out in the country”.²⁶² It is undisputed that the security of Central Asia and Russia are part of the same puzzle. However, the potential bonds between Chechen extremists, and Central Asian extremists do not mean, as Putin suggested, that all Islamic movements speak through one voice. Putin has argued that the events of September 11 were proof that Islamic terrorism knows no borders (Bush has the same views; this will be discussed in the chapter on American influences in Central Asia). He called this ‘the plague of the twenty first century’. Putin went as far as calling the events of September 11 a ‘global Chechnya’.²⁶³

The term ‘international terrorism’ is far too easily used as a justification of policies. This often results in a lack of comprehension of the real reasons that create Islamic aggression, and therefore prevents a real solution. For example, the motives of Hamas, which is called a terrorist group by the west, are very much different to those of the IMU, which is also called a terrorist group by the west. They have both been involved in acts of violence, but the essence of their foundation, the reasons for their development, gives both these organisations a very different character. It is important to remember that these two organisations are both regional organisations not global. Hamas (elected into government in 2006) has been concerned with Palestinian resistance, and not with achieving an Islamic state (it is also a social/humanitarian organisation, which provides for a huge portion of Palestinian welfare). This point is very clearly made by Gunning when he says, “The Hamas leadership has by and large dropped its absolutist demands regarding an Islamic state”.²⁶⁴ The IMU’s motives are very much guided by their determination to create an Islamic state in Uzbekistan, and destroy the Karimov regime. These two organisations are fighting different wars with different agendas. It appears that the problems Putin and the Central Asian leaders have are mainly with regional Islamic extremism. Al-Qaida is the only organisation with a global agenda and the ability and will to infiltrate to all regions of the world.

²⁶² Vladimir Bozhko, ‘Kazakhstan: Minorities Concerned at Anti-Terror Moves’, The Times of Central Asia (Bishkek), vol.6, no.48 (229), 2 December 2004

²⁶³ O’Loughlin, Tuathail, Kolosov, ‘A Risky Westward Turn?’, pp. 3-4

²⁶⁴ Jeroen Gunning, ‘Peace with Hamas? The Transforming Potential of Political Participation’, International Affairs, vol.80, no.2, March 2004, p. 247

The links between Al-Qaida and Islamic groups in Central Asia are prominent because Al-Qaida's training camps were in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, and provided a safe haven and training for the men of the two leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Juma Namangani and Tohir Yuldeshev, as well as to the IRP before the 1997 peace agreement. As Jane's Sentinel argued in 1996, "There is concern over the cross-border insurgency/counter-insurgency war currently being waged with Afghan supporters of the Tajik opposition. Attacks on government forces by the Islamic opposition in 1996 were initiated by rebels based in Afghanistan crossing the border into central Tajikistan".²⁶⁵ As M A Smith rightly points out, "Moscow has argued that the perceived increase in a threat of Islamic extremism throughout Central Asia, backed by forces outside the former Soviet Union, gives Moscow and the Central Asian states a common security interest that serves as a basis for closer security cooperation".²⁶⁶ Chechen extremists and other Islamic forces in Central Asia and Afghanistan are therefore part of the same regional threat. Gleason backs this view when he says, "the Russian imbroglio in Chechnya and the related terrorist war against civilians in Russia was a major factor in Russia's effort to defuse jihad movements that it believed were intellectually and financially supported from Afghanistan. Moscow believed that the war in Chechnya, terrorist attacks in Russia and Uzbekistan and the hostage taking in Kyrgyzstan all had links to Islamic extremism that led back to training camps in Afghanistan".²⁶⁷

As already mentioned, the fear that Chechen rebels and Central Asian extremists have and will continue to cooperate together, has made Central Asia appear even more essential for Russia's national and security interests. This is a view agreed on by Trenin and Malashenko especially when they say, "Chechnya has become, with certain limits, an exporter of radical Islam to Muslim regions of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States".²⁶⁸ Active radical Islam is not something that can be exported easily. Radicalisation can be exported from the Caucasus to Central

²⁶⁵ 'Tajikistan', *Jane's Sentinel: Russia and the CIS*, Coulsdon, Surrey, 1996, section 9.0.3

²⁶⁶ M A Smith, 'Russian Foreign Policy 2000: The Near Abroad', *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, Sandhurst, December 2000, p.13

²⁶⁷ Gregory Gleason, 'The Politics of Counterinsurgency in Central Asia', *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.49, no.2, March-April 2002, p.11

²⁶⁸ Dmitri V. Trenin and Aleksei V. Malashenko, *Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechen Factor in Post-Soviet Russia* (hereafter *Russia's Restless Frontier*), Washington, D.C., 2004, p. 72

Asia or Afghanistan because each country or group of countries belong to the same region, with similar social, political, economic ethnic and historic roots. In reality the Chechen wars received very little help or recognition from Arab and Muslim countries. The Taliban were the only regime to recognise the existence of an independent Chechnya.

The rise of Islamic awareness amongst the Muslims of the world (after September 11) further intensified with America's strong rhetoric aimed at Iran, and other Muslim countries. The ongoing war in Iraq and the continuation of American presence in Afghanistan has fuelled the situation even more. This has also had an effect on Central Asia. This is a form of non-radical Islamicisation or passive Islamicisation, which is coming from outside Central Asia; it is an external Islamic influence. As mentioned in the second chapter, the political situation is slowly worsening in all five Central Asian countries. The regimes are becoming more and more authoritarian, and all opposition is crushed. This is coupled with bad economic and social conditions, and an antagonistic global (American-led) attitude towards Islam. As a result there has evolved an increase in Islamic awareness and a rise in tension in the region. The combination of internal and passive external pressure has caused Islamic extremist movements to diversify their aims and targets. The most recent and revealing examples were the suicide bombing operations aimed at the American and Israeli embassies in Tashkent in the summer of 2004. This highlights a reaction to events that go beyond domestic grievances. These two suicide-bombing operations were not only aimed at destabilising the Karimov regime, but also to show discontent and anger in regards to the policies of the USA and Israel; both these countries' policies are seen as anti-Islamic. According to Igor Rotar, "Military operations by the U.S and its allies also elicited very negative reactions amongst the religious parts of Uzbek society".²⁶⁹

In 1996 the threat of terrorism of the Islamic type was an alien phenomenon (in Central Asia) as shown in the following quote made by Jane's Sentinel, "Since the unrest of the 1980s and early 1990s, neither terrorism nor political violence has been a

²⁶⁹ Igor Rotar, 'Why Extremism is on the Rise in Uzbekistan', The Jamestown Foundation, vol.2, issue.16, d.o 12.8.04, d.d 3.3.05,
http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=400&issue_id=3047&article_id=3368400

major problem...Insurgent action has also been contained since the problems caused by the transition from communism to democracy”.²⁷⁰ The political Islamicisation of Central Asia, and the fear of terrorist acts are more present today than ever before; this is due to domestic hardship and external antagonism (as explained above). This situation becomes even more threatening when it is realised that the Taliban movement in Afghanistan has not been completely defeated; it is simply functioning underground, waiting for the right moment to re-emerge. Instability, and the continuation of American military presence in Afghanistan are indicators that the country is still not safe. The Americans appear to have weakened the Islamic extremist threat but not killed it. This is causing great concern for Central Asia. It is feared that instability in Afghanistan still has the potential to create instability in Central Asia, and therefore also in Russia. Arman supports this argument when he says, “they (the Tajiks) also worry that US-led stabilization efforts in neighbouring Afghanistan are flagging, posing a serious security threat for the entire region”.²⁷¹

Just like the Taliban, who were officially sponsored and influenced by Bin Laden and Al-Qaida, are still unofficially in function in Afghanistan today, so could the IMU. According to some sources the IMU is also functioning in Pakistan. However it is unclear how strong they are after having been targeted by the Americans in Afghanistan.²⁷² The Islamic threat appears to be thriving and growing underground, waiting for the right moment to engulf the region or at least cause profound instability. Russia appears aware of this risk, and tries to highlight the possibility that regional Islamic groups communicate.²⁷³ September 11 for Russia and Central Asia occurred in 1999, with the bombing of apartment buildings both in Moscow and Tashkent. Since 1999, Putin has spoken of ‘international terrorism’ in regards to Chechnya, Central Asia and the Balkans.²⁷⁴ Both these events were blamed on Islamic extremists and indicate a rising wave of regional Islamic violence and tension throughout the region.

²⁷⁰ ‘Kyrgyzstan’, *Jane’s Sentinel: Russia and the CIS*, section 6.7.4

²⁷¹ Kambiz Arman, ‘Tajikistan Shuns United States, Tilts Toward Russia’, *Eurasianet.org*, d.o 14.06.04, d.d 26.06.04, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav061404a.shtml>

²⁷² Daan van der Schriek, ‘Fish in Search of a Sea’, *Transitions Online*, d.o 10.3.05, d.d 12.3.05, www.tol.cz

²⁷³ Mark A Smith, ‘Russian Perspectives’, p. 10

²⁷⁴ Dmitri Trenin, ‘Southern Watch: Russia’s Policy in Central Asia’, *Journal of International Affairs*, vol.56, no.2, Spring 2003, p.123

One of the reasons why he referred to such acts as ‘international terrorism’ and not ‘regional terrorism’ was so he could get international support for his campaign in Chechnya. Since September 11, Putin has taken advantage of the international atmosphere, and further emphasised the links between Chechen separatists and Islamic extremists of Al-Qaida and the Taliban.²⁷⁵

After September 11, the international environment appeared more understanding to Putin’s anti-Chechen rhetoric. This did not affect his relationship with the Arab and Muslim world. Many Muslim countries sympathise with the Chechen cause because of its Islamic elements, yet remain unwilling to lose Russia as an ally and friend for a cause that is not theirs. This comes at a time when many Muslim countries have their own regional dilemmas to deal with. As Trenin and Malashenko say “The most important misinterpretation is the exaggerated impression of an international Islamic presence in the North Caucasus....According to Chechen rebels, foreigners account for 1-2 percent of the total rebel strength and, therefore, they cannot decisively influence the course of the war. Local politicians (Russian) privately agree with that estimate”.²⁷⁶

The need to fight Islamic extremism is an issue that unites both the USA and Russia. However, it appears that they each prefer to do it independently. Even though Putin talks about global terrorism and aligns himself with the USA in this struggle, their understanding of ‘threat’ and their cooperation in the war on terror seems to have started and ended in Afghanistan. Russia’s war on terror appears more regional than global. This became extremely clear over the disputes and disagreements regarding the invasion of Iraq. The possibility of yet another American invasion, this time of Iran, is an extremely sensitive topic for Moscow. The reasons for this will be discussed below.

Iran’s relationship with the Soviet Union and Russia has not always been consistent. The Iranian revolution in 1979, and the ousting of the pro-American shah were the first signals that Tehran’s relationship with Moscow could experience a positive development. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan marked the end of any chance of a

²⁷⁵ John Russell, ‘Exploitation of the Islamic Factor in the Russo-Chechen Conflict Before and After 11 September 2001’, *European Security*, London, vol.11, no.4, Winter 2002, p.97

²⁷⁶ Trenin and Malashenko, *Russia’s Restless Frontier*, p.91 & 97

rapprochement between these two neighbours. The Soviet campaign in Afghanistan meant that the Ayatollahs were unwelcoming of Soviet aid throughout the Iranian-Iraqi war, which further caused deterioration in Iranian-Russian relations. The situation worsened when Moscow started collaborating with the Saddam regime in Iraq. It was not until the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the disintegration of the USSR that relations seriously started to improve.²⁷⁷ Iran had always tried to maintain some contact with the USSR's Muslims. This, however, was done with Moscow's knowledge and approval. Iran was very much concerned not to appear to be a destabilising force for the Muslim SSRs. It emphasised that although it recognised, and supported the Soviet Muslim demand to worship freely, it also emphasised its positive relationship with the Soviet government.²⁷⁸

Russia, after the collapse of the USSR, did not fear that the clerics in Iran would try to export their form of Islamic fundamentalism to Central Asia.²⁷⁹ One of the main reasons for this is because the Central Asians are Sunni Muslims, and the Iranians are Shia Muslims. Another reason is Iran's good relationship with Russia, and its interests in maintaining good political and economic ties with the regional superpower. In addition, Iran has enough dilemmas and problems of its own. It is important to point out that although Iranian-Russian relations were not always at their best throughout the Soviet period, there never existed outright hostility between these two countries. According to the Iranian Journal of International Affairs, Iran places its relationship with its direct neighbours in first position. The area of second importance to Iran is the Middle East. The third most important entity is the Islamic world (in general). Iran's relationship with Russia is put in fourth place, followed by Central Asia in fifth. Its relationship with the USA comes near the bottom of the list.²⁸⁰

Moscow's sale of conventional weapons and nuclear technology to Tehran became a topic of high sensitivity after Bush included Iran as part of an 'axis of evil'. Since 1991, Russia's arms cooperation with Iran has not been entirely smooth and consistent.

²⁷⁷ Edmund Herzig, Iran and the Former Soviet South, London, 1995, p.8

²⁷⁸ David Menashri, 'Iran and Central Asia: Radical Regimes, Pragmatic Politics', in David Menashri (ed.), Central Asia Meets the Middle East, London, Portland, OR, 1998, p.82

²⁷⁹ Edmund Herzig, Iran and the Former Soviet South, p.9

²⁸⁰ Mohammad Javad Larijani, 'Iran's Foreign Policy: Principles and Objectives', The Iranian Journal of International Affairs, vol.8, no.4, Tehran, winter 1996, p.758

It was during El'tsin's first tenure that the relationship between Iran and Russia cooled down; this was done as a result of Washington's pressure on Russia. Washington persuaded Moscow to pledge that it would no longer strike any deals with Iran in regards to arms sales. Russia was also persuaded to promise that it would end any existing nuclear programs with Iran by 1999. These promises were not enduring, and by December 2000 Sergei Ivanov withdrew from the 1995 agreement and resumed links with Iran.²⁸¹ According to Bukkvoll, "There has been three distinct policy phases. The Russian state actively supported exports to Iran in the early 1990's, renounced exports in 1994-95, then resumed sales in November 2000".²⁸² Russia began to realise that both itself and Iran had a lot to benefit from one another. Russia sees no harm in providing for Iran a nuclear reactor and nuclear fuel as long as it feels safe that Iran will not use this technology in creating a nuclear bomb or in becoming a nuclear power. Russia has continuously repeated that its actions are fully legitimate, and under the supervision of the IAEA.²⁸³

Russia has geo-strategic and geo-economic interests to protect in the Iranian region. Iran, like Iraq is a rich country in natural resources, and is one of the five littoral states of the Caspian Sea. As will be discussed in the chapter concerned with pipelines and the natural resources, the USA has frequently tried to construct and sponsor pipelines and other energy-related projects, which attempt to marginalise both Russia and Iran. A kind of resource war is evolving between the major powers in the region. If the USA were to invade Iran, it would gain direct access to the natural resources of the Caspian Sea, and consequently have a larger role in the energy projects of not only Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan but also Russia. It would become an even more powerful economic hegemon than it is today. This issue clearly highlights the augmenting competing Russian and American influences over the Central Asian region and the Caspian Sea.

As Moscow was realising, in the few years after the disintegration of the USSR, that its concerns differed to those of the west, two incidents occurred that further confirmed

²⁸¹ Tor Bukkvoll, 'Arming the Ayatollahs: Economic Lobbies in Russia's Iran Policy, *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 49, no. 6, November-December 2002, p.29-30

²⁸² *ibid.* p. 30

²⁸³ *AlJazeera.Net*, 'Putin: Iran will not seek Nuclear Arms', d.o 18.2.05, d.d 20.5.06, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/5102E175-CBBA>

this assessment. It was during this period that the Tajik civil war erupted, and the regime of the Soviet-backed Muhammad Najibullah fell in Kabul. Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen emphasises the importance of these two events when he says, “the main event triggering the Russian concern was the beginning of the Tajik unrest, which entered its first phase in the spring of 1992 and which, coinciding as it did with the downfall of Afghan president Najibullah in April 1992, undoubtedly gave rise to serious speculation in Russia”.²⁸⁴ These two events were alarming to Moscow, as they symbolised an appearance of political Islam in the region. The 1993 and 2000 Foreign Policy Concepts point to the escalating threat of extremism. The 2000 Foreign Policy Concept says, “Russia’s interests are directly related to other tendencies as well, such as: military-political rivalry among regional powers, growth of separatism, ethnic-national and religious extremism”.²⁸⁵ These events encouraged Russia to declare that its external borders coincided with those of the CIS, consequently meaning that Russian security was dependent on the security of some of the former Soviet Republics.²⁸⁶ This was a way of saying that it was in Russia’s national interest to remain strong in its former sphere of influence.

Russia’s vital role was highlighted when Russia’s 201st MRD was able to halt the escalation of tension in the Tajik civil war. Russia had to protect its own national security by intervening, and even though not all Central Asians were happy with this, it was in their interest to accept it. As Legvold says, “Everywhere the sources of instability or unease create hinges linking the security interests of states, even when some want little to do with those from whom they cannot free themselves”.²⁸⁷ The events of September 11 further endorsed Putin’s argument that political Islam was a growing force, and that his actions in Chechnya were justified, as was Russia’s military presence in Central Asia.²⁸⁸ However, American foreign policy after September 11 symbolised an equal challenge to the one Putin had previously been

²⁸⁴ Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen, ‘Central Asian Islam and Security’, *Europe -Asia Studies*, vol.49, no.5, July 1997, p. 1502

²⁸⁵ *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, 2000, p. 3, <http://www.in.mid.ru/BI.nsf/arh/9A9C030B27>

²⁸⁶ Hunter, *Islam in Russia*, p. 332-333

²⁸⁷ Robert Legvold, ‘Great Power Stakes in Central Asia’ (hereafter ‘Great Power’), in Robert Legvold (ed.), *Thinking Strategically*, Cambridge, MA, London, 2003, p.4

²⁸⁸ Eitvydas Bajarunas, ‘Putin’s Russia: Whither Multi-Polarity’, *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, Sandhurst, March 2002

fighting. Today, Russia's interests are even more under threat. The USA is no longer only a global rival, but also a regional rival. Concern in the Russian Duma prompted the Duma chairman, after visiting Tajikistan, in criticising the increasing military presence of the USA, and suggesting that Russia should do the same.²⁸⁹ In October 2004, Tajikistan granted Russian forces a permanent military base. In acquiring this base, Russia can now pursue its policy to guarantee regional security, and can also show the USA that it will not allow this part of its former sphere of influence to be usurped. This Russian military base will be the new home to the 201st MRD; it is also the largest Russian military base in the former Soviet Union. This ultimately means that Russia will invest heavily in Tajikistan, and turn a blind eye to their escalating debt.²⁹⁰ According to Kambiz Arman, "Russia appears to be the winner in the geopolitical struggle for Tajikistan. At a recent summit, Moscow secured a dominant economic and military position in Tajikistan for the foreseeable future".²⁹¹ This occurred shortly after Rahmonov had shown growing interest in a strategic partnership with the USA (more on this in the chapter related to American influences in Central Asia).

Even President Karimov has said that Central Asia needs Russian security and that Russia has strong interests in the Central Asian region²⁹²; this means economic, political and security interests. Karimov declared to Putin on a visit to Uzbekistan in 2004, "Your visits are not something unusual. Every visit of yours means solution to problems".²⁹³ Regardless of Uzbekistan's lack of enthusiasm to Russia's growing role in the region, and support for other competing powers, it remains unwilling to distance itself from Russia. One of the reasons for this is because both these countries are strong trading partner with reciprocal benefits. This form of inter-state economic dependency could not be so easily implemented with other powers. Uzbekistan neither

²⁸⁹ M A Smith, 'Russia, The USA and Central Asia', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, May 2002, p.3

²⁹⁰ MosNews.COM, 'Russian Military Base in Tajikistan to Ensure Regional Security', d.o 18.10.04, d.d 22.10.04, <http://www.mosnews.com/news/2004/10/18/tajbasrus.shtml>

²⁹¹ Kambiz Arman, 'Tajikistan Shuns United States, Tilts Toward Russia', Eurasianet.org, d.o 14.6.04, d.d 26.06.04, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav061404a.shtml>

²⁹² M A Smith, 'Russian Foreign Policy 2000: The Near Abroad', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, December 2000, p. 16

²⁹³ Karimov, 'Russian President is Familiar Person in Central Asia', Itar-Tass News Agency, d.o 17.10.04, d.d 6.12.04, <http://www.tass.ru/eng/level12.html?NewsID=1357283&PageNum=0>

has the ability to produce high quality products nor the marketing experience to start exporting to the west, or in fact anywhere outside the CIS.²⁹⁴ Around 20% of Uzbek imports and exports are carried out with Russia.²⁹⁵ A distinct pro-Russian shift occurred in the latter half of 2004; this was due to the decision by America to cut US\$18m of aid from a total of US\$55m after Karimov failed to introduce proper reforms, especially those related to democratisation and human rights.²⁹⁶ America's decision to cut aid pushed Karimov into the arms of Moscow. Shortly afterwards, Karimov initiated Russian membership to the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation. Washington's decision to cut aid came after increased pressure and criticism that it was turning a blind eye to Karimov's oppressive policies simply because he had welcomed them in Central Asia more than any of his counterparts had. Uzbekistan was also the only Central Asian country in GUUAM, and Karimov had always been vocal in his suspicions of Russia influences in Central Asia. Although Uzbekistan has had many shifts towards and away from Russia, this shift appears more serious as it has put Russia right in the heart of Central Asia's economic policies.

Even in Turkmenistan, Russia feels it has to repel any traces of extremism that could affect the safety of the region; these two countries are also very much oriented towards strong and friendly cooperation with Iran. "The relationship (Russian-Turkmen) is based both on Turkmenistan's geo-political location and Moscow's perception of the Russo-Turkmen partnership as a barrier to the spread of Islamic fundamentalism".²⁹⁷ Russia's relationship with Turkmenistan is not the strongest from the Central Asian countries. Nevertheless, Putin is very keen not to let the USA have a bigger role in the affairs of this globally and regionally isolated country. Niyazov has not only shown warmth in his relationship to Moscow, but also to the USA, especially after September 11. He has appeared interested in gas pipeline projects that are initiated by the USA.²⁹⁸ Niyazov, even before September 11, had been involved in dialogue with the USA over the construction of the Trans-Afghan Pipeline (Turkmenistan's involvement in

²⁹⁴ Martin C. Spechler, 'Free at Last: Uzbekistan and Russia', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 49, no.1, January-February 2002, p. 67

²⁹⁵ *ibid.* p. 63

²⁹⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Uzbekistan', London, New York, Hong Kong, September 2004, p.8

²⁹⁷ 'Turkmenistan', Jane's Sentinel: Russia and the CIS, Coulsdon, Surrey, 1996, section 10.8.10

²⁹⁸ Lena Jonson, Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy (hereafter Vladimir Putin and Central Asia), London, New York, 2004, pp. 105-106

pipeline deals will be discussed in chapter 5). Russia's main cooperation with Turkmenistan is in the energy sphere, as it is in Russia's advantage to remain the most influential over Turkmenistan's gas deposits.

Putin was also insistent not to let relations between Moscow and Ashgabad become sour over the issue of dual citizenship. In 2003, Niyazov wanted to abolish the dual citizenship law he had agreed on with Moscow in 1993. The issue of the Russian diaspora in the FSU is of importance to Moscow; therefore it was not surprising that Moscow feared that many of the ethnic Russians in Turkmenistan might become outcasts and consequently mistreated. Moscow also did not want a large stream of ethnic Russians from Turkmenistan coming to Russia to find work. The Russian Duma was agitated by Niyazov's new law, but could not react too harshly because of the 25-year gas deal with Turkmenistan agreed to in April 2003. The deal gave Gazprom the right to purchase all Turkmen gas. This caused an outcry amongst many of the Russian elites who felt they had sold the rights of the ethnic Russians in Turkmenistan for gas. Gazprom's deal has very much helped secure the continuation of Russian influences in Turkmenistan.²⁹⁹

The USA's increasing military presence in Central Asia has prompted Russia to increase its own military role. Shortly after September 11, the role of the USA military seemed to have more importance than that of the Russian. Since that time, Russia has pursued an active policy in making a re-entry into Central Asia as a profound force that cannot be marginalised. As 'Operation Enduring Freedom' continued, American presence in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was starting to cause concern for Moscow. In January 2002, the US congress sent a delegation to Central Asia in order to discuss further military and economic assistance. This was an indication that the USA had long-term plans in the region. Russia responded by also sending some of its own delegates to discuss the situation in the region, and provide for any needed assistance.³⁰⁰ Putin was coming under pressure not only from the political elite but also from ordinary Russians who did not want to see Russia making concessions in regards to its role in Central Asia. No one wanted to see a repetition of the Gorbachev and

²⁹⁹ *ibid.* p. 106-107

³⁰⁰ *ibid.* p. 94

El'tsin years.³⁰¹ Jonson summarises the situation very precisely when she says, “ the post-11 September developments in Central Asia radically changed the strategic situation in the region. Two parallel security arrangements were in the making-one led by Russia and the other by the USA”.³⁰²

In October 2003, Russia obtained a military base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan. This was a clear indication that Russia was not going to allow its influence to wane in Central Asia. The creation of an American military base at Manas had caused great discomfort to the Russian leadership and military.³⁰³ The Russian base has 500 military and civilian personnel, 20 aircraft including attack planes, fighter planes, transport planes, and helicopters. This has helped Russia feel and demonstrate that its influence has not been overshadowed by that of the USA. Akayev's words at the opening ceremony were equally reassuring to Moscow, and its future role in Kyrgyzstan. He said, “the opening of the military base is evidence of Russia's important role in the cause of ensuring stability and security in Central Asia...in recent years our countries have encountered new threats and challenges. The base will be a bulwark in the struggle against them and will enable our countries to ensure stability in development”.³⁰⁴ The new Russia military base in Kant and the temporary base in Dushambe (this later became a permanent Russian base) gave Russia the opportunity to cover surveillance and maintain control in the Ferghana Valley, which is known to be the hotbed of Islamic extremist. The opening of the new base in Kyrgyzstan, reflected Russia's long-term interests in maintaining influence in the region-both for its advantage and for the advantage of the Kyrgyz people.³⁰⁵ Akayev strongly condemned the Rose revolution in Georgia and the Orange revolution in Ukraine. He regarded this as American meddling in domestic affairs of independent countries. This has triggered Russian enthusiasm to double the amount of equipment and personnel in the Russian military base at Kant. A further blow to the USA came when the Akayev government announced that in

³⁰¹ Anatol Lieven, 'The Secret Policemen's Ball: the United States, Russia and the International Order After 11 September', *International Affairs*, vol.78, no.2, 2002, p.253

³⁰² Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, p.97

³⁰³ Steve Rosenberg, 'Kyrgyzstan Agrees Russian Base', *BBC News*, d.d 8.2.04, d.o 22.9.03, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3129582.stm>

³⁰⁴ Akayev, 'Kyrgyzstan: Russian Base at Kant seen as Counterweight to Manas NATO Base', *Eurasianet.org*, d.d 8.2.04, d.o 24.9.03, <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan/hypermail/200309/0036.shtml>

³⁰⁵ Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, p.96

agreement with the members of the CSTO and the SCO, it would refuse the deployment of US AWACS surveillance aircraft at Manas.³⁰⁶

Russia has made it clear that its duty is to protect all ethnic Russians in the former Soviet Republics. The 2000 Foreign Policy Concept argues that it is Russia's goal "to protect the rights and interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad on the basis of international law and operative bilateral agreements".³⁰⁷ This concern with the interests of the ethnic Russian minorities, in the former Soviet Republics is likely to have evolved for two reasons. The first is the fact that Moscow is genuinely concerned about the ethnic Russians living outside Russian borders, especially in areas such as the Baltic, where Russia is very much regarded with hostility. As Hyman pointed out, "For the Yeltsin government, the problem of 25 million Russians outside Russia had grown steadily in importance since mid-1993. Even if it wished to, Russia simply cannot shake off responsibility for their welfare".³⁰⁸

The second reason for Russia's interest in its diaspora could be so that it remains influential in its former Republics. Its diaspora is a good reason for its continued pivotal role in the policies of its neighbours, while at the same time protecting its security concerns and national interests. Those critical of Russian Foreign Policy towards the region have often called this, 'Russian hegemony'. "Even if the Yeltsin government lacks expansionist designs, the collapse of the Soviet Union has left Russia with great residual power over all the smaller CIS Republics. This creates opportunities to pursue specific interests and to develop a role in the former Soviet Republics, which Russian leaders are now determined to exploit."³⁰⁹ In reality however, Russia does not use the minorities' argument to force itself into Central Asian affairs. There are other far greater reasons that bind Russia and Central Asia.

³⁰⁶ Daniel Kimmage, 'Analysis: Central Asia Provides Window on Russia-US Relations', RFE/RL Newsline, d.o 23.2.05, d.d 24.2.05, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/02/a69ed33d-f483-4570-928f-5a9281c768a6.html>

³⁰⁷ The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000, p. 7, <http://www.ln.mid.ru/BI.nsf/arh/9A9C030B27>

³⁰⁸ Anthony Hyman, 'Russians and Minorities in Central Asia', in Roy Allison (ed.), Challenges for the Former Soviet South, Washington, D.C, 1996, p.51

³⁰⁹ Hyman, 'Russians and Minorities in Central Asia', p.53

After independence, Central Asia in general adopted an accommodating brand of nationalism towards its Russian minorities. This was very much in contrast to the antagonistic brand of nationalism the Baltic States took in regards to their Russian citizens. As Commercio argues, “Latvia and Kyrgyzstan differ in the degree to which they are nationalizing states. While Latvia has adopted an exceptionally antagonistic nationalization strategy that promotes Latvians at the expense of Russians, Kyrgyzstan has adopted an accommodating nationalization strategy that attempts to balance the conflicting interests of Kyrgyz and Russians”.³¹⁰ The Baltic people, to a certain extent, have a discriminatory attitude towards Russians in their country; the Russians go to different schools, bars, and restaurants than the rest of the titular population. There is little integration between these two groups. This is very different in Central Asia; the ethnic Russians are very much integrated with the Central Asian population, even in Uzbekistan. They socialise and work together; even diplomats and politicians representing different Central Asian countries in the international arena are often ethnic Russians.³¹¹ This is further revealed by the accommodating language laws (these have already been discussed under Russification), which have been adopted in the Central Asian countries, none of which exist in the Baltic countries. Therefore, it does not appear too surprising that Russia feels it has a duty to protect the ethnic Russians in the former Soviet Republics, as often (but not in Central Asia) their rights are vague. Carlisle reminds us that even in Uzbekistan the Russian minorities were never really treated as foreigners, “ It is clear that all Russian inhabitants cannot be viewed as foreigners and outsiders. Some have lived in Central Asian for generations. Many-indeed most- of the non-native cadres are drawn from such an indigenous yet non-Muslim local community”.³¹²

³¹⁰ Michele E. Commercio, ‘Exiles in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan’ (hereafter ‘Exiles’), *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol.51, no.6, November/December 2004, p.24

³¹¹ Many of the academics, politicians and economists I spoke to in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were ethnic Russians. Many of them were very much surprised when I asked them if their allegiance was more to the Russian Federation than the Central Asian country they had been born and brought up in all their life. Their answers always asserted that their home was Central Asian, and their loyalty was to which ever Central Asian country they were from. In Bishkek, the ethnic Kyrgyz youth and the ethnic Russian youth ate, drank vodka, danced and socialised together. Having seen these young people together, it became undisputed that these two groups were very much integrated; everyone was a Kyrgyz citizen.

³¹² Donald S. Carlisle, ‘Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev’, in William Fierman (ed.), *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, 1991, p. 96

Kazakhstan is the strongest, richest and most stable Central Asian country; it is also one of the most pro-Russian Central Asian countries. Nazarbaev has always advocated strong and positive ties with Russia. This was clearly seen over Kazakhstan's support to Russia over the Ukraine crisis.³¹³ Nazarbaev believed that the USA was meddling too much in the internal politics of some countries. Kazakhstan does not border the Ferghana Valley and does not appear to have strong Islamic extremist movement on the same scale as those in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, Russia's main concerns in Kazakhstan are related to energy resources, pipelines, and the large ethnic Russian minority in the country. Putin is very concerned not to let this oil-rich country fall to the temptations of the USA. Competing influences over Kazakhstan's energy resources will be discussed in chapter 5.

Kazakhstan at the time of independence was the only Soviet Republic where the titular nationality was not the majority. In 1991 there were more ethnic Russians living in Kazakhstan than Kazakhs. The majority of the Russians lived in the north of the country, while the Kazakhs and other nationalities lived in the south and west. After independence the ethnic balances slightly changed. Many Kazakhs living outside their homeland were encouraged to return to Kazakhstan. This occurred at the same time as many Russians immigrated to Russia. Although Kazakhs today are the majority in their country, Russia still exerts a profound amount of influence over this former Soviet Republic. One of the reasons is due to the remaining large Russian minority who still live there.³¹⁴ Nazarbaev's concern about the large Russian diaspora, and Russia's role in Kazakh affairs has forced him to move the capital from Almaty, which is in the south-east to Astana, which is in the north. The reason for this is because the Russian community in Kazakhstan resides in the north. This rather extreme measure is to ensure that the Kazakh authorities remain in control of the Russian populated north. This move came after some concern that northern Kazakhstan could join Russia, consequently dividing the country.³¹⁵

³¹³ Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Kazakhstan', January 2005, p. 17

³¹⁴ Richard Pomfret, 'Aid and Ideas: The Impact of Western Economic Support on the Muslim Successor States', in Ro'i (ed.), *Democracy and Pluralism*, p.86-87

³¹⁵ Mikhail Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance: Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992-1997*, Westport, Connecticut, London, 1999, p. 101

The Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan has helped build and maintain the friendly relationship between the regime in Moscow and the regime in Astana. The Russians in Kazakhstan appear well respected and well treated by the Nazarbaev regime, especially when their situation is compared with the situation of other ethnic Russians living in the FSU. The Russian population is particularly supportive of Nazarbaev, and sees him as a protector of their rights. Nazarbaev, a Russian-speaking member of the former Soviet nomenklatura has always emphasised Kazakhstan's Eurasian identity and its close cooperation with Moscow.³¹⁶ In many ways the guaranteed protection of the ethnic Russians, lies in the continuation of his presidency. It remains essential to remember that Kazakhstan's strong relationship with Moscow goes beyond the issue of the Russian minority in the country.

³¹⁶ Pal Kolsto, 'The Price of Stability: Kazakhstani Control Mechanisms under Conditions of Cultural and Demographic Bipolarity', in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, p.167

3.7 Economic Developments between Russia and Central Asia

This section will focus on the economic factors that contribute to Russia's influence in Central Asia. This will not include discussion on energy resources and pipelines. A separate chapter is dedicated to Central Asia's energy resources and pipeline infrastructures. Over the years Russia's interest in creating a strong economic regional complex with the countries of Central Asia has greatly increased. This initiative has recently appeared reciprocal, as the countries of Central Asia and Russia seem to be taking joint steps in the sphere of economic regionalisation. The reasons for Russian and Central Asian economic engagement will be discussed below.

Just after the disintegration of the USSR, Moscow not only politically showed disinterest in Central Asia but also economically. Russia saw many of the FSR's as free riders, curtailing its potential economic strength.³¹⁷ It took the path of quick and profound economic reform in the direction of globalisation, and creation of a market economy. This was not the case for the Central Asian countries, which had hoped for closer economic integration with Russia, instead they found themselves outside the rouble zone, having to invent their own currency,³¹⁸ and deal with economic obstacles and institutional differences that they had never dealt with before. At that time, many in the Russian political and economic arena were caught in the euphoria that characterised the disintegration of the USSR. It was genuinely believed that Russia would have to simply open up its markets to the world, and foreign investment would flow, resulting in economic prosperity.³¹⁹

By the late Kozyrev period, Russia was realising that the political image it had first adopted for itself, after the collapse of the USSR, was not the one that best suited it.

³¹⁷ Gertrude Schroeder, 'Economic Transformation in the Post-Soviet Republics', in Bartłomiej Kaminski (ed.), *Economic Transition in Russian and the New States of Eurasia*, Armonk, NY, London, 1996, p.19

³¹⁸ *ibid.* p.15

³¹⁹ Vladimir Paramonov and Aleksey Stokov, 'New Russia's Strategic Choice: Regionalisation versus Globalisation' (hereafter 'Regionalisation versus Globalisation'), *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, Sandhurst, May 2004, p.1

Consequently, as was discussed in the previous sections, it re-orientated itself to a political position that best suited its national interests. In terms of economic interests, according to Paramonov and Stokov, Russia (after September 11) has made bold statements and clear indications and decisions to concentrate its attention regionally. This does not only mean in the political and security spheres, but also in the economic one, and specifically on Central Asia's economic integration.³²⁰ A number of agreements have supported the above view, such as the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of a Single Economic Space (SES) by Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan in September 2003 at the CIS summit in Yalta. Although the SES only involves one Central Asian country, it exposes Russia's regional economic integration agenda with some of the former Soviet Republics, and its enthusiasm to adopt its own economic shield. It is hoped by some members of this organisation that this common economic space will reincarnate an economic union similar to the one before the collapse of the USSR. The next step would be to reach an agreement over common tariff codes and a customs union, in addition to the possibility of establishing a common currency for the entire bloc.³²¹ Kazakhstan's willingness to join the SES is also an indication that it welcomes regional economic integration with Russia as a main player.

The Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) is an example of an attempt towards economic integration that has not always appeared very successful. The organisation started in 1995, when it was decided between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, to create a customs Union (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan joined later). The Customs Union agreement was renewed in 1999 and developed into the EurAsEC in 2000. Many of its members hoped to see this organisation develop into a regional structure, like NAFTA or ASEAN, recognised by international organisations such as the UN.³²² The EurAsEC in theory unites some of the world's richest countries in natural resources, covers vast expanses of territory and encompassed a population of around 189 million people; it has the potential of being a major player in the world markets. This organisation also

³²⁰ This is the main point made throughout Paramonov and Stokov's article.

³²¹ Sergei Blagov, 'With Eyes on the US, Russia Bolsters Central Asian Presence', *Eurasianet.org*, d.o 26.6.04, d.d 9.9.04 <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav062204a.shtml>

³²² Devendra Kaushik, 'Regional Cooperation: The Central Asian Experience', *Contemporary Central Asia*, vol.4, no. 1-2, New Delhi, Kolkata, April-August 2000, p.35

gears its members to joining the WTO.³²³ Until 2005, the EurAsEC did not look capable of making a positive change to its member countries. On October 6 2005, it was agreed at a summit of the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO-this organisation will be discussed in more detail below) to merge these two regional economic organisations together. It was hoped that merging these two economic regional complexes would accelerate and facilitate economic integration in the region.³²⁴ After the merger, membership of the EurAsEC included all the CACO member countries minus Uzbekistan and including Belarus.³²⁵ On 25 January 2006, Uzbekistan joined the EurAsEC at a summit in St. Petersburg.³²⁶

The disappointing results of regional integration have pushed each country to focus on its own economy, regardless of what stage of development its neighbours are in. This has also happened as a result of hostility between the Central Asian countries (this has been mentioned in the previous section). For example, if one Central Asian country upsets another, for whatever reason, it has often been the case that the angered country will react in a way that will cause harm to its neighbour, such as turning the oil or gas taps off. This has often occurred between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It is this kind of aggressive bilateral behaviour, which has distanced the prospects of regional integration.³²⁷ The advantages of regional cooperation do not always seem to be fully understood amongst the Central Asians; however, as seen below this trend is slowly starting to change. As Green says, “Although not sufficient in itself to provide for a high level of growth, regional economic cooperation is necessary”.³²⁸ In fact a country like Tajikistan is in desperate need for any form of regionalisation. It appears that independence has done more harm than good for that country, which is often given as an example of a ‘failed state’. Independence has meant loss of security, especially due

³²³ Leila Muzaparova, ‘Economic Integration in Central Asia: Problems and Prospects’, Contemporary Central Asia, vol.5, no.2, August 2001, p.32

³²⁴ Central Asian Gateway, ‘Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC)’, d.d 23.5.06, <http://www.cagateway.org/index.php?lng=1&topic=23&subtopic=85>

³²⁵ Farkhad Tolipov, ‘CACO Merges with EEC: The Third Strike on Central Asia’s Independence’, Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, d.o 19.10.05, d.d 16.7.06, http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=3741&SMSESSION=NO

³²⁶ Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, ‘Uzbekistan Joins Eurasian Economic Community’, d.o 25.1.06, d.d 20.5.06, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/01/a0064d5e-1409>

³²⁷ David Jay Green, ‘Regional Cooperation Policies in Central Asia’, Journal of International Development, no.13, Chichester, NY, Weinheim, Brisbane, Singapore, Toronto, 2001, p.1159

³²⁸ *ibid.* p. 1155

to ethnic and religious strife, which plunged the country into 5 years of civil war, in addition to drug trafficking and illegal smuggling. Since 1991 there has also occurred a huge decrease in the standards of living, as well as the disintegration of the social and urban services.³²⁹ According to Gofurov and Abdullakhanov the lack of regionalism is not an unusual phenomenon for newly independent countries. They say, “While analyzing the situation of the Central Asian region as a whole, it may be considered that it is not exceptional. Such a situation occurred in the process of de-Stalinization and transition to political self-dependence in the regions of south and east Asia, including in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and also in other regions of the world”.³³⁰

As seen above, and in previous sections, most regional organisations involving Central Asia, or in fact all of the CIS are not as effective as they promised to be. This is of course not to say that they are useless; their most useful characteristic is the fact that they have been created out of the positive initiatives of their members. It is almost more important that the Central Asian countries and Russia are willing and ready to form an economic or security based organisation, than how effective the organisation really is. It should be remembered that these former Soviet Republics, in addition to Russia, have not been independent, self-sufficient countries for long. As seen in previous sections, Russia did not develop its Foreign Policy identity until the mid 1990’s. The EU, for example, and other regional organisations, took years to develop into what they are today. Proper integration takes years, and the attempt made by Russia and Central Asia should not be disregarded, but given time to mature and develop.

Russia’s most important step in economic integration with Central Asia has been its membership in the Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) in October 2004. Russia’s membership in this organisation went beyond mutual economic interests and benefits. In the past few years there has been a clear intensification of Russian efforts in the economic and political sphere in connection with Central Asia. Russian economic integration with Central Asia has played the leading role on Russia’s

³²⁹ *ibid.*

³³⁰ O. Gofurov and R. Abdullakhanov, ‘Integration or Economic Nationalism?’, *Contemporary Central Asia*, vol.5, no.2, August 2001, pp. 17-21

political stage.³³¹ The origins of the CACO first started with the creation of the Central Asian Union (CAU) in 1994; this was an economic union with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan as its participants. Ironically this union was initially created as a buffer to Russian influences. The CACO decision to allow Russia to join in 2004 was an indication of the change in the level of Russia's influence in Central Asia. The three member countries (especially Uzbekistan) had hoped to further economic cooperation amongst one another by creating a common economic area. As with most regional organisations (especially those excluding Russia) the CAU never made an outstanding contribution to the political and economic arena.³³² It was these three Central Asian countries that developed Centrasbat in 1995, by first creating the Council of Defence Ministers. In 1998 the CAU transformed itself into the Central Asian Economic Union (CAEU) and then the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC). Tajikistan was finally able to join this organisation after its economy had been ripped apart for five years during the civil war.³³³ At the end of 2001 the CAEC became the CACO. The Central Asian invitation to Russia to join them in the CACO marked the start of a profound Russian economic influence over the region. As stated above, in October 2005, the CACO underwent further transformation by merging with the EurAsEC.

Paramonov believes that one of the main reasons why Russia opted for regionalisation was because globalisation was not as successful as it originally hoped it would be.³³⁴ Igor Ivanov even called Russia's participation in the CACO a result of the "challenges of globalisation".³³⁵ This view has many followers, but there is more than one component that has triggered Russia's regional personality. The intentions of the USA, perceived as invading what Russia sees as its political, security and economic roles in Central Asia, have made it fight back for what it regards as its own influences. Increasing American presence in the region in all spheres is one of the most important

³³¹ Interview with Vladimir V. Paramonov, Leading Research Fellow at the Center for Economic Research, Tashkent, September 2004

³³² Annette Bohr, *Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy*, London, 1998, p.44

³³³ Roy Allison, 'Regionalism and Security in Central Asia', *International Affairs*, vol.80, no.3, May 2004, p.473

³³⁴ Interview with Vladimir Paramonov, September 2004

³³⁵ Igor Ivanov, 'With Eyes on the US, Russia Bolsters Central Asian Presence', *Eurasianet.org*, d.o 22.6.04, d.d 3.5.06, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav062204a.shtml>

reasons behind Russian enthusiasm to join what had previously been an entirely Central Asian organisation. As Sahgal says, “this move (joining the CACO) is increasingly seen as a check of the US...push into the region”.³³⁶ The CACO tried to broaden its scope; although it primarily remained an economic organisation, it also had a political and defence agenda. Russia expanded the aims of the CACO in order for this organisation to have greater regional control. According to the Kyrgyz press, Russia wanted to intensify cooperation between member countries, especially in regards to the effective use of water and energy resources. Russia also wanted to create a single transport space and a network of international transport corridors on the territories of CACO member countries. It wanted to intensify its cooperation with the other members of the CACO in regards to combating terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking and organised crime.³³⁷ The EurAsEC has dedicated particular attention not to lose the diverse and positive characteristics of the CACO during the merger.³³⁸ It appears that the CACO/EurAsEC, the CSTO and the SCO have very similar agendas, and all have Russian participation. Russia seems to be persistent in not allowing any other country to take its role in Central Asia. The CSTO focuses on keeping Russia dominant in the defence and security spheres; inside the SCO Russia is able to keep an eye on Chinese influences by giving the organisation a joint anti-American characteristic. The SCO also allows Russia to maintain its powerful traditional role in regards to security, secessionism and Islamic extremism. The CACO/EurAsEC aims to achieve Russian dominance through economic tactics, which also encompassed elements of security and defense. The results all lead to a similar conclusion, that Russia is now supporting a regional strategy in order not to also see its influences wane in Central Asia, as it has in some of the other former Soviet Republics and the Middle East.

Russia joined the CACO because it was invited into the organisation at a CACO summit in Dushanbe in October 2004. Perhaps slightly unusual, was the fact that

³³⁶ Arun Sahgal, ‘Growing Russian Influences in Central Asia’, *Pravda*, d.o 5.11.04, d.d 24.11.04, http://english.pravda.ru/world/20/91/366/14545_CentralAsia.html

³³⁷ *Kyrgyzstan News: Comprehensive Development Framework and National Poverty Reduction Strategy*, ‘Russian President will take part in Central Asian Cooperation Organisation Summit’, d.o 19.10.04, d.d 22.10.04, <http://cdf.gov.kg/en/news/?id=4026>

³³⁸ *Itar-Tass*, ‘EurAsEC Head of Government Meeting begins in Minsk’, d.o 19.5.06, d.d 26.5.06, <http://www.tass.ru/eng/level2.html?NewsID=8434655&PageNum>

Russia's participation in the CACO came at the initiative of Uzbekistan. At the CACO summit, President Karimov highlighted the significance of Russia in such an organisation. He discussed the positive potential that Russia could bring into the organisation in regards to strengthening the bonds of cooperation and integration, especially as Russia had proven to be an undisputed asset in the region in terms of providing security and stability. The other CACO members supported the Uzbek leader's proposal to invite Russia as a full-fledged member of the CACO.³³⁹ This was a sign of increased Russian influence in Uzbekistan. Karimov appeared to have realised that his country needed to create a single economic body with Russia in order for the Uzbek economic situation to improve. He also realised that this kind of body can never be achieved with the USA, which had recently cut down the amount of aid it provided Uzbekistan. After the events in Andijan, Karimov became even more resolved on Russian-centered economic integration, and as stated above became the latest member to join the EurAsEC in 2006. Regional economic integration is useful to both Russia and the Central Asian countries; it is a reciprocal relationship.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Radio Tashkent International, 'Presidents of Central Asian Countries meet in Astana', d.o 31.5.04, 13.2.05, d.d 15.2.05, http://ino.uzpak.uz/eng/coment_eng/coment_eng_3105.html

³⁴⁰ Interview with Vladimir V. Paramonov, Leading Research Fellow at the Center for Economic Research, Tashkent, September 2004

3.8 Conclusion

Russia's influence on culture, the economy, security and politics has been analysed in this chapter on the region, and on the separate Central Asian countries. Russia's historic legacy has been very important in allowing Russia to maintain a pivotal role in Central Asia over a decade after independence. Analysis of the historic legacy helps explain why Russia is not perceived today as having been an occupier of the territory of present day Central Asia. This aids in explaining the lack of hostility seen between Central Asians and Russians, especially in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

This generally accommodating attitude towards Russia and Russians has resulted in a strong Russian cultural influence in the region. As this chapter has shown, the amount of Russification in Central Asia differs considerably from country to country. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are the most linguistically and behaviorally Russified, followed by Uzbekistan and then Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Behavioural Russification has played a role in the evolution of the Central Asian identity; as previously discussed the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz (especially in the north), other than being the Central Asians that are the most linguistically Russified, also are the closest to the Russian way of living, thinking, eating etc. In addition, six million ethnic Russians still live in Kazakhstan. These characteristics are also seen in the other Central Asian countries even in the most Islamicised ones. Russification in both its forms has ultimately played a large role in Central Asian's orientation towards Russia and the way the Central Asians perceive the growing role of the other two powers in the region.

Politically Russia is also seen as having a strong influence as all the Central Asian countries (to varying degrees) are imitations of the Soviet political model. Even a coloured revolution in Kyrgyzstan was not able to help the country break away from its political past. Even if the Foreign Policy of a country is oriented away from Russia the domestic milieu still favours Russian political influence. This was most clearly seen in Uzbekistan. Karimov, like his counterparts in Central Asia is the product of the

Soviet political system. The Central Asian leaders' internal politics will remain more acceptable to Russia than to any other power.

Russia's influence in regards to security has increasingly become challenged by the USA. Since independence, and particularly before the war on terror, Russia was the most favoured (and effective) security provider for the region. This was particularly seen during the Tajik civil war and various other instances of friction between weaker and stronger Central Asian countries. Its security providing role has not only earned it loyalty from the Rahmonov regime and consequently a Russian military base outside Dushanbe, but also helped create regional security structures aimed at fighting regional threats, such as extremism, terrorism, crime and drug trafficking. Security based organisations have also enabled Russia to remain active in the security sphere of the region, especially when faced with competing security organisation and military bases from the USA. Russia's security-related influence was strongly challenged by America's defeat of the Taliban regime, and the creation of an American military base both in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The creation of a Russian military base at Kant was a way for Russia to counterbalance American military presence in Kyrgyzstan and remain prominent in the country's security. Karimov's demands for the American military withdrawal from Karshi-Khanabad after Andijan reinforced Russia's ambitions to remain the strongest security providing power in the region.

Economically Russia also attempts to expand its influence over the region. It faces growing competition in the energy sphere, and tries to maintain strong regional (including other countries of the CIS other than Central Asia) economic organisations such as the SES, and the CACO/EurAsEC. These kinds of organisations have not in the past been very promising, and Russia's influence in this sphere is challenged by America's bilateral economic relationship with the Central Asian countries.

Thus, it appears that Russia's strongest and most enduring influences lie in the political and cultural spheres. The former can be challenged by fundamental changes to the political infrastructure, resulting from the death of the leaderships (on the condition that they will not be succeeded by their children or like-minded individuals), or by effective revolutions. The latter can be challenged by other cultural influences on the

Central Asian population or by the introduction of either a new culture or the development of an already existing one.

4.0 American Influences in Central Asia since 1991

This chapter examines the USA's role in Central Asia, and traces the seeds of competition with Russia since 1991. The definition of influences corresponds to the same definition as in the chapter dealing with Russia. There are five sections in this chapter. The first section traces the evolution of American foreign policy towards the region since the collapse of communism, and the first signs of challenge and tension between the USA and Russia. The following four sections deal with the different kinds of influences that America has on the Central Asian regimes and on the population. As with the chapter related to Russia, American influences over Central Asia refer to security, politics, economics and culture. Each of these influences mentioned above will be examined for each of the five Central Asian countries individually. It seems important also to point out that there was surprisingly a lack of material and resources for research, especially when dealing with American political influences in the Central Asia, and particularly when looking at American influences on culture. There was plenty of material on America's political role in Uzbekistan but a profound lack of sources for the other Central Asian countries. American influence on Central Asian culture was even more difficult to find. There seems to be a vast void of academic work in this field. Therefore, most of the citations have either been from interviews conducted in Central Asia, or from personal observations while out there. In addition, some Internet sources have been quoted which would have otherwise not have been used due to their non-academic background, with the limited amount of non-electronic and electronic literature to work with, they have occasionally been used. I hope that this chapter will contribute to the very much-needed research on American influences in Central Asia since 1991.

4.1 Patterns of American Foreign Policy Towards Central Asia Since 1991

The nature and extent of American interest in Central Asia appears to follow a similar route to that of Russian foreign policy towards Central Asia after 1991; both have been on a gradual increase, especially since September 11. According to S. Neil Macfarlane, American foreign policy towards Central Asia can be divided into three stages. The first stage occurred from 1992-94, when the USA established relations with the new states of the region and underlined its interests to support their independence and transition to democracy and economic reform. In addition, the Clinton administration was particularly interested in creating a non-nuclear zone, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region. In spite of this concern, Central Asia remained in the early 1990's on the periphery of U.S foreign policy priorities. By the mid 1990's (second stage) both Russian and American objectives towards the region began to take new forms. It was at this point that Washington realised the region's untapped wealth, and the positive potentials of becoming a player in Caspian affairs.³⁴¹ Washington argued that increased US involvement in the region would not only be prosperous for the USA, as it would ensure access to natural gas resources and provide for American business opportunities, but would be equally beneficial for the region. It was at this stage that projects such as the B-T-C pipeline began to evolve. The Clinton administration also spoke about its determination in assisting with market reforms, developing the rule of law, boosting educational exchanges and strengthening civil society.³⁴² From that early stage American foreign policy was focused on having long-term effects, which would also infiltrate the population. The USA was making its first steps in becoming a geo-strategic power in Central Asia.

³⁴¹ S. Neil Macfarlane, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', *International Affairs*, vol. 80, no. 3, May 2004, pp.450-451

³⁴² Ariel Cohen, 'U.S. Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia: Building a New', *The Heritage Foundation: Policy Research and Analysis*, d.o 24.6.97, d.d 19.7.05, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasi/BG1132.cfm>

The USA's tactics in evolving its power in Central Asia did not take a subtle approach for the sake of not antagonising its cold war foe-Russia. By 1996, the Clinton administration had openly declared that it was its goal to achieve eastward expansion for NATO. The USA had previously involved the Central Asian countries in NATO's partnership for peace (PFP), which was seen by Russia as not only a threat but also as an introduction to full membership at a later stage. NATO's PFP with the Central Asian countries will be discussed in the following section. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the USA could have had a less antagonistic approach towards Russia with NATO expansion by offering Russia (in the early 1990's) a special role in its relationship with the organisation.³⁴³ From the start of the USA's early involvement in Central Asia, it seemed apparent that the USA was not a power willing to change its priorities in order to create a partnership with Russia. Organisations such as GUUAM, and projects designed to exclude Russia and Iran from pipeline projects, proved this point at the early stages of US involvement in Central Asia.³⁴⁴ The only underlying relationship appeared to be one of competition. These points will be covered in more detail in the coming sections.

It is unclear how involved the USA would have become in Central Asia had the events of September 11 not occurred. The gradual increase of American interest in the Caspian region, and the development of US-initiated and US-sponsored projects suggest that Washington, from the start, was determined to acquire some sort of influence in the region. The events of September 11 gave it the opportunity to expand its power base from mainly economic objectives regarding the Caspian basin, to also political, social and security ones. Therefore, the third stage of American involvement in Central Asia began as a result of September 11. However, for a brief period after September 11, it appeared that partnership rather than competition would prevail between Russia and the USA.³⁴⁵ Putin was in full support of the creation of American bases in some of the Central Asian countries (this will be covered in more detail

³⁴³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geo-strategic Imperatives (hereafter The Grand Chessboard), New York, 1997, p.101

³⁴⁴ Ehsan Ahrari, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington' (hereafter 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia'), Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003, p. 162

³⁴⁵ Anatol Lieven, 'The Secret Policemen's Ball: The United States, Russia and International Order After 11 September' (hereafter 'The Secret Policemen's Ball'), International Affairs, vol. 78, no. 2, April 2002, p. 252

below), in addition to his open support of the American-led campaign against terrorism. The reasons behind this support have already been discussed in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia.

The second honeymoon period between the USA and Russia appeared to have been even shorter than the first, which occurred after the disintegration of the USSR and lasted until the late Kozyrev period. The second honeymoon was short lived as the USA's multi-vectored interests began to show long-term interests, making the USA a regional power and a threat to Moscow's status in Central Asia. The brief partnership between these two countries was also tarnished as a result of both US and Russian security, political and media establishments mistrusting one another. This reveals the extent at which cold war hostilities remain deeply embedded in both camps. It became widely believed that Washington was pursuing a policy, which would include Central Asia and the Caucasus in its own sphere of influence.³⁴⁶

America's renewed role in Central Asia since September 11 has created an arena of geo-strategic rivalry, which has affected the overall power balance of the region. This situation is of particular concern to Russia and China who have consequently strengthened their cooperation. Not only is the SCO becoming one of the most influential regional organisations, it is also seen as a defence against American hegemony. The geo-strategic alliance between these two regional powers is also showing signs of stretching its arms towards Iran.³⁴⁷ In 2005, the SCO was considering Iranian membership.³⁴⁸ All three regional countries have similar objective, such as creating a bloc against American influences, defeating terrorism, Wahhabism, separatism and strengthening their economic, and energy related links.³⁴⁹ In regards to Central Asia, it is in Russian and Chinese interests to remain aligned and united so long as the USA poses a threat to both of them. As mentioned previously, this phenomenon prevents China from becoming a competing influence over Central Asia.

³⁴⁶ Martin McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia: a Modern History* p. 140

³⁴⁷ Jephraim P. Gundzig, 'The Ties that Bind China, Russia and Iran', *Asia Times Online*, d.o 4.6.05, d.d 1.7.05, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/china/GF04Ad07.html>

³⁴⁸ *Islamic Republic News Agency*, 'China's SCO Terms Iran Important, Influential State', d.o 1.7.05, d.d 1.7.05, <http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/menu-234/0507010346133402.html>

³⁴⁹ Gundzig, 'The Ties that Bind China, Russia and Iran'

4.2 America's Contribution to Central Asian Security

4.2.1 NATO's Partnership for Peace, Centrasbat and GUUAM

Prior to September 11 American focus on security in Central Asia was limited, although the growing power of the Taliban, the IMU incursions into Batken in 1999 and 2000, the bombings of Tashkent in 1999, and the Tajik civil war should have been alarming indications of a strong wave of Islamicisation gaining momentum in the region. It was not until the post-September 11 era that security became one of the most important issues binding the USA to Central Asia. This was the issue that brought the American military to the heart of the former Soviet Union, an act unimaginable before September 11. Once the USA was physically present in the region to fight the war against terror, Russia's traditional role as security provider was challenged. Before focusing on the war on terror and the creation of military bases that followed, America's security-based agenda prior to September 11 will be discussed.

The USA's determination to spread its influence in the former Communist bloc came in the form of NATO expansion. According to Brzezinski, "even the former Soviet space is permeated by various American-sponsored arrangements for closer cooperation with NATO, such as the Partnership for Peace".³⁵⁰ The USA consolidated its role in the security sector of the Central Asian countries by extending NATO activities to them via the PFP programme. This programme reflects the USA's agenda of spreading its influence over regions that it was previously alien to, regardless of Russia's discomfort with this. In 1994, all the Central Asian countries other than Tajikistan, which was experiencing a civil war, became members of the PFP programme. Russo-centric security structures were seen as being undermined by this.³⁵¹ PFP allowed NATO to enter a dialogue with the member countries that were geographically far, and to develop a relationship with them. According to NATO PFP representatives, the organisation's main focus for cooperation with Central Asia was to achieve consultation in regards to security concerns. NATO was also keen to offer US

³⁵⁰ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p.27

³⁵¹ Macfarlane, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', p. 453

assistance for defence reforms.³⁵² NATO's PFP appears to be the American twin of the CSTO. Both these organisations are aimed at providing security, assistance and defence planning, in addition to providing military exercises. US forces participated in military exercises in the region in 1997, 1998 and 2000. In 2002, Tajikistan became the final Central Asian country to participate in the programme. Therefore, it is not a surprise that in 2001 the CST signatories faced up to the challenge, and transformed themselves into the more focused and more efficient CSTO.

America's involvement in security and defence structures has not been confined to the PFP programme. With the encouragement of the USA, Centrasbat was created in 1995/96. This battalion comprises Kazakh, Uzbek and Kyrgyz troops; it was established under NATO auspices and with Centcom support.³⁵³ The origins of this organisation are trilateral and regional; the defence ministers of the CAEC decided to address military and security cooperations, which resulted in the creation of Centrasbat. This battalion was designed to improve the cooperation between the member states' forces in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. In August 1997, the Kazakh, Uzbek and Kyrgyz forces conducted their first overseas exercise in North Carolina. US troops have also been involved in exercises in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 1997 and 1998.³⁵⁴ The actual achievements of Centrasbat are limited, and the battalion often appears effective only on paper. The main importance of this structure is that it is heavily supported and sponsored by the USA, in ways that often appear solely beneficial for Washington's status as an active player in Central Asia's security and defence structures.

The creation of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) in 1997 and GUUAM (with the addition of Uzbekistan) in 1999 marked a profound step in the latter countries' westward orientation. Karimov's withdrawal from the CST and membership to GUUAM firmly highlighted the common objectives he had with the

³⁵² Video interview with Robert Simmons, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Security Cooperation and Partnership and Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, 'Cooperation with the Caucasus and Central Asia', *NATO Multimedia Video Interviews*, d.o 15.9.04, d.d 20.7.05, <http://www.nato.int/multi/video/2004/040910-simmons/v040910e.htm>

³⁵³ Macfarlane, 'The United States and regionalism in Central Asia', p. 453

³⁵⁴ *GlobalSecurity.org*, 'Military: Centrasbat', d.o 27.4.04, d.d 18.7.05, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/centrasbat.htm>

USA in challenging Russia's role as security provider. Some of GUUAM's objectives were to fight terrorism, extremism, separatism, illegal arms deliveries, illicit drug and human trafficking and assistance in the peaceful settlement of conflicts.³⁵⁵ GUUAM remains one of the only regional cooperation organisations to be fully promoted and funded by the USA.³⁵⁶ This is how the USA has tried to make its mark, and spread its influence in the former Soviet Union. In reality, GUUAM's influence barely has effects; the organisation has never materialised into an effective alliance, it simply separates those countries which are wary of Russia's role in the region from those that are in favour of Russia. The USA has not appeared to take GUUAM too seriously either. Uzbekistan's suspended membership in 2002 did not appear to tarnish the Uzbek-American alliance. Uzbekistan's membership to the SCO further reiterated the country's double-faced/multi-vectored policies. After September 11, the USA tried to revive this paralyzed grouping by granting its members approximately two billion dollars, but this rehabilitation policy also seemed to have limited effects.³⁵⁷ GUUAM's attempted comeback was aimed at re-attempting to provide a counterweight to Russian influences in the Caspian basin and Central Asia. During the organisation's Yalta gathering in 2003, the group pledged to recover from the malaise it had contracted during its early years.³⁵⁸ In spite of these efforts, Karimov withdrew his country from the organisation in early May 2005 (before the Andijan incidents). The organisation's dormant character still prevails; an indication of this is that Uzbekistan is still listed as a member country on GUUAM's official website. The reason for this is that no one has deemed it relevant to update the website since 2000.³⁵⁹ Throughout Uzbekistan's non-eventful life in GUUAM, the main message it sent to its neighbours was that it approved, and supported a counterbalance to Russia's influence and Russo-centric organisations in the region. For the USA, Uzbekistan was the window to Central Asia.

³⁵⁵ Iaroslav Matiichik, 'GUUAM: Its Current State, Risks, and Prospects' (hereafter 'GUUAM'), *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, no. 5(29), 2004, p. 126

³⁵⁶ Macfarlane, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', p. 453

³⁵⁷ Matiichik, 'GUUAM', p. 126

³⁵⁸ Taras Kuzio and Sergai Blagov, 'Eurasia Insight: GUUAM makes Comeback Bid with US Support', *ArtUkraine.com*, d.o 7.7.03, d.d 23.7.05, <http://www.artukraine.com/buildukraine/kuzio6.htm>

³⁵⁹ *GUUAM*, d.o 1996-2000, d.d 19.7.06, <http://www.guam.org/>

4.2.2 The War on Terror

The war on terror produced the most prominent changes in American involvement in Central Asia. After September 11, countering extremism and terrorism was the new focus of American foreign policy. It was in the USA's national interest to station its troops in countries that would make its operation in Afghanistan easier. This way the USA would also be close to the tide of extremism that was affecting Central Asia. This fitted perfectly with Washington's agenda to fight terrorism, and at the time appeared mutually beneficial for all those involved in the region.³⁶⁰

The Central Asian leaders' keenness to participate in the US-led operations, and their enthusiasm to allow for the creation of American bases on their territories was alarming to Russia. Putin, although an eager supporter of the war on terror, realised that opposing the USA's military deployments in Central Asia would risk reducing Russia's influence in the region.³⁶¹ In spite of Russification particularly in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the vital role of the 201st MRD in Tajikistan, the compromise dual citizenship laws in Turkmenistan, the efforts of the CST to build a security bloc, and the economic- and energy-related ties between the Central Asian countries and Russia, Central Asian leaders appeared willing to allow the USA into their midst. One of the most important reasons that united the feelings of the Central Asian countries to accept American involvement, was their desire to fight the growing influence of Islam, and defeat one of the sources of unrest in the region-the Taliban. The USA was the only country able and willing to engage itself in a fight with the Taliban. Washington was strong enough to save Central Asia from the increasing threat of the Taliban. For this reason some in Central Asia view America's security-providing role as irreplaceable with that of any other power. America's security and defence role in the region in defeating the Taliban regime dwarfed all efforts made by the CST/CSTO and the SCO.³⁶² Moscow also had much to gain from the destruction of the Taliban, and their Al-Qaida training camps. Putin could not afford to be left out of the engagements

³⁶⁰ Joseph S. Nye JR, 'The American National Interest and Global Public Goods', *International Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 2, April 2002, p. 235

³⁶¹ Mark A Smith, 'Russia, the USA and Central Asia', *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, May 2002, p.3

³⁶² Interview with Bakyt Beshimov, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, American University Central Asia, Bishkek, November 2005

between Central Asia and Washington, and so he endorsed the decision to allow the US military into Russia's traditional corner of the chessboard.

Unsurprisingly, Uzbekistan was very enthusiastic to render its assistance to the USA in the war on terror. Since the latter half of the 1990's, Karimov had challenged Russia's role in his country, and had distanced Uzbekistan from Russo-centric organisations such as the CST. He regarded Moscow's influence as a limitation to Uzbekistan's leading role in Central Asia. In 1998 he conducted what is sometimes referred to as a 'secret alliance' with the USA. Two events provoked such cooperation, the first was the success of the Taliban's offensive, which brought them 125 km from the Uzbek-Afghan border, and the second were the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.³⁶³ US Special Forces were given permission by Karimov to conduct clandestine efforts against Osama bin Laden and his supporters. It was, therefore, expected that Uzbekistan would be host to American troops after September 11.³⁶⁴

Uzbekistan was in a highly advantageous position after September 11. It had already proved to Washington that it was supportive of its policies, and critical of Russia's role in the former Soviet space. On 12 October 2001, Washington and Tashkent signed a statement defining their partnership as a qualitatively new relationship, while stressing the USA's new role as security guarantor for Uzbekistan.³⁶⁵ This was Karimov's declaration that his country belonged in the American camp.

The first American troops arrived in late September 2001 and were located in the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) base, ninety miles away from Afghanistan. Karimov repeatedly reiterated his decision to pursue a strategy of increased security cooperation with the USA, and consequently was not prepared to give a withdrawal deadline for the troops. He declared that the USA was there to carry out a task, and would remain until the job was done.³⁶⁶ It appeared that the USA was a security provider not only against the

³⁶³ McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia*, p.152

³⁶⁴ Ahrari, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia', p.164

³⁶⁵ Taras Kuzio, 'Geopolitical Rivalries in Eurasia', *The Jamestown Foundation*, d.o 19.12.01, d.d 13.7.05,

http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=8&issue_id=452&article_id=3863

³⁶⁶ Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, p. 88-89

threat from the Taliban, the increasing threat of terrorism, but also against Russian interference in Uzbek affairs.

The presence and consequence of US forces in Uzbekistan was a topic of tension and controversy between the State Department and the Pentagon, and amongst Uzbek domestic circles. The intensification of the USA's hegemonic character after September 11 was a result of the Pentagon's growing role in foreign policy decision-making. The State Department wanted to see less military components in America's foreign policy and more emphasis on democratisation, human rights and reform. A tug of war appeared to have evolved within the American political system.³⁶⁷ The State Department repeatedly spoke out against Karimov's authoritarianism, and Uzbekistan's appalling civil rights record.³⁶⁸ The struggle between the State Department and the Pentagon in formulating a single foreign policy is also very relevant for the section on the USA's political influence over Central Asia. It appears that both Bush administrations have, at first, preferred to comply with the wishes of the Pentagon, even if this meant a more aggressive foreign policy, which often disregarded the abuses of the Karimov regime for the sake of maintaining a military strategy in the country. Washington realised that if it consolidated a strong military presence in one Central Asian country which it regards as a strong ally, then this would place it in an advantage position vis-à-vis the other Central Asian countries in the future.³⁶⁹ This bilateral-based strategy is not always successful as will be explained in the section dealing with the USA's political influences in Central Asia.

The events in the Ferghana Valley, which started on 13 May 2005, caused a breakdown in the strong relationship between the USA and Karimov. Those in the State Department spoke more loudly than ever before. The Bush administration found it difficult to pursue its relationship with the Karimov regime without igniting rage at the abuses the authorities carried out on its people during this incident. The USA's insistence (under pressure from other western governments as well) to open an

³⁶⁷ Andrea Koppel and Elise Labott, 'Powell Battles Pentagon Over Response Strategy', [CNN.com/U.S. d.o 20.9.01, d.d 20.7.05](http://CNN.com/U.S.d.o.20.9.01.d.d.20.7.05), <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/us/09/20/ret.powell.divisions/>

³⁶⁸ U.S Department of State, 'Uzbekistan: Country Report on Human Rights Practices', d.o 4.3.02, d.d 12.7.05, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8366.htm>

³⁶⁹ Interview with Iris Beybutova, November 2005

investigation in the events of the Andijan episode have caused a massive rift with the Uzbek regime. The State Department's views over this incident were that the Uzbek government owes the international community, and its own people, a credible investigation into the events. The State Department refused to dilute the seriousness of what happened, even if this affected America's role in the region.³⁷⁰ This followed only a year after the US government cut assistance to Uzbekistan, resulting from the State Department's continuous insistence that the Uzbek government had not made sufficient progress in regards to political and economic reform.³⁷¹ The details of the amount of aid cut have already been discussed in the chapter dealing with Russian influence in Central Asia. Karimov's reaction to the reduction of financial aid in 2004 made him turn towards Russia. Shortly after this event, Karimov invited Russia into the CACO. His reactions to the State Department's criticism over the Andijan events have caused him to act even more drastically. Both Russia and China refrained from criticising the tactics of Karimov in response to the Andijan unrest, and made it public that they did not support the calls for an international investigation. China even signed a \$600m oil deal with Uzbekistan only weeks after the Karimov regime became the focus of international criticism.³⁷² Their priority seems more focused on winning back Uzbekistan, consequently limiting the influence of the USA in the region.

The SCO summit on July 5 2005 launched a verbal offensive on the USA's military role in Central Asia. Karimov, having endured strong criticism from the USA, supported the declarations made at this summit. The SCO called for the non-interference in the international affairs of sovereign states; this was a message to Washington that its role in the region was unwelcomed. The members of the SCO, including Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, made their intentions clear about curbing the American military presence in their countries.³⁷³ At the summit, the members demanded from the USA a clear timeframe, and deadline for the withdrawal of coalition forces from Central Asian bases, especially as the phase of active military operations in Afghanistan had ended. The request for a deadline was reported to have

³⁷⁰ Tim Receveur, 'U.S Discusses Policies Toward Uzbekistan after Andijan Violence', International Information Programs: USINFO.STATE.GOV, d.o 8.6.05, d.d 24.7.05, <http://usinfo.state.gov/eur/Archive/2005/Jun/06-501312.html>

³⁷¹ *ibid.*

³⁷² Andrew Yeh, 'Uzbekistan Signs \$600m Oil Deal with China', Financial Times (London), 26.5.05

³⁷³ The Economist, 'The Shanghai Six: Suppression, China, Oil', 19.7.05

come at the initiative of Karimov.³⁷⁴ According to Benjamin Robertson, “The SCO’s notice to Washington was followed by statements from the Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments suggesting they were reconsidering the future of American bases on their territory”.³⁷⁵ Karimov initially reduced the flying rights of the American troops from K2, criticised the way the base was being run, and pointed to the accumulating debt from landing and takeoff fees.³⁷⁶ A notice from the Uzbek government followed requesting the removal of US troops from K2. The USA tried to downplay the potential consequences of this declaration. The US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, rejected the calls for a deadline for US forces to withdraw from the region, and argued that US troops were still needed in Central Asia.³⁷⁷ This outlines the hurricanes of influences crashing together in Central Asia. It is also important to point out that the reasons for lack of cooperation amongst the strategic powers in the region is not entirely the fault of the USA. Such statements made by the SCO eradicate any hope of an alliance or partnership, and highlight the growing tension and determination by the competing powers to outdo one another. This does not mean that the USA will allow for its role to be belittled in a region it regards of essential geo-strategic and geo-political interest. It is not in the character of US foreign policy in general, and the Bush administration in particular to be bullied into a situation that they consider unfavorable. The Karimov regime is known to stand where the strongest political winds blow.³⁷⁸ His growing concern that the USA was eventually going to instigate an orange or rose styled revolution to oust him from power, as he believed happened with Shevardnadze and Yanukovich, has caused him to align himself closer to the leaders of the SCO. Karimov seems to have learnt the lesson well from his CIS neighbours; too much US interference in politics could become counterproductive. Karimov has stated that the Andijan riots were triggered by outside interference, and hinted that the USA aimed at creating instability in order to impose its own political and economic

³⁷⁴ Templeton Thorp, ‘SCO: Shoring Up the Post-Soviet Status Quo’, d.o 8.7.05, d.d 21.7.05, <http://www.templetonthorp.com/ru/news982>

³⁷⁵ Benjamin Robertson, ‘Central Asian Nations Rethink US Presence’, AlJazeera.Net, d.o 17.5.05, d.d 24.7.05, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/A7A5EC54-C516>

³⁷⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷⁷ Political News, ‘Rice Rejects regional Call for US Troops to Pull Out of Central Asia’, d.o 10.7.05, d.d 23.7.05, <http://www.political-news.org/breaking/13105/rice-rejects-regional-call-for-us-troops>

³⁷⁸ Interview with Maya Sabirdina, Counsellor, Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic, London, 3.6.04

agenda.³⁷⁹ Unlike in Georgia, Karimov is certain that the USA will not support the opposition, as it is primarily Islamic. The eviction of the American troops from K2 is a geo-strategic defeat for the USA, and a win for Russia and China. A counter-reaction from Washington is inevitable in due course, especially as they have declared that they will maintain their military presence in Central Asia despite the closedown of K2. It appears that relocation is being discussed; rumors seem to point to Tajikistan, although it is still too early to tell.³⁸⁰

A first-time visitor to Manas international airport may be overwhelmed at the number of 'US Air Force' planes in this former Soviet Republic. Manas airport is the largest location of US troops in Central Asia (the Americans call their base at Manas 'Ganci' after the New York Fire Department Chief, Peter J. Ganci, who died on September 11). Kyrgyzstan, one of the most Russified Central Asian countries and active participant of all Russo-centric organisations, overtly showed its enthusiasm and willingness to allow its territory to be used by the US military for their missions in Afghanistan. As a member of the CST, Akayev did have to officially coordinate his plans with Moscow. By the end of December 2001, the Kyrgyz parliament officially agreed to allow the US forces to set up a military base at the same location as its main civilian airport-Manas. The air base is designed to accommodate five thousand people.³⁸¹ Officially this base is international, used by multi-national coalition forces, but in reality it is a symbol of America's military might. It is an American base, used predominantly by American troops with the official aim of fighting terrorism, and the unofficial one of placing the USA at the heart of a region it wishes to have influence over.³⁸²

It appeared that the Central Asian leaders, regardless of their relationship with Moscow, were ready to engage with the USA as a result of the benefits this brought. Other than financial assistance, these autocratic leaders hoped that by bringing the USA closer to their internal affairs they could strengthen their grip on power. Having US support would put them in an advantageous and strong position vis-à-vis the

³⁷⁹ Benjamin Robertson, 'Central Asia Nations Rethink US presence', *AlJazeera.Net*, d.o 17.7.05, d.d 15.8.05, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/A7A5EC54-C516-4618-A277-52CE6622BCC3.htm>

³⁸⁰ *MosNews.COM*, 'US to Stay in Central Asia After Uzbekistan Pullout', d.o 8.5.05, d.d 9.8.05, <http://www.mosnews.com/news/2005/08/05/ustostay/shtml>

³⁸¹ Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, pp.85-89

³⁸² Interview with Yevgenni Kablukov, September 2004

growing domestic dissatisfaction. Alignment with the USA, with its focus to eradicate terrorism, would also enable the leaders to crack down on Islamic movements, irrespective of how dangerous or moderate they were.³⁸³ This was a very tempting situation for Akayev.

Although the Kyrgyz leadership was very supportive of the USA's new role in Central Asia and the stationing of troops on Kyrgyz soil, this enthusiasm waned after the Georgian revolution, which ousted Shevardnadze from power in 2003. The Kyrgyz leadership's relationship with the USA entered a new phase once America's role in the ousting of the Georgian president became clear. Shevardnadze, the former Soviet Foreign Minister, during the revolutionary Gorbachev years had been the west's man, and yet there was no reluctance in supporting those who wanted his removal from power once the American tide had turned against him.³⁸⁴ This was alarming to most of the Central Asian leaders, who had welcomed American arrival in their region, but particularly alarming to Akayev. This caused some tension between Bishkek and Washington.³⁸⁵ Akayev was very vocal on his views regarding the 'rose revolution' and insisted that outsiders had initiated it. He also argued that such foreign involvement was a challenge to the CIS. Although he never mentioned the USA, it is clear that he was referring to it when he talked about 'outsiders'.³⁸⁶

The Kyrgyz revolution in March 2005 ousted president Akayev from power. Unlike the case in Georgia, the USA's role was indirect. It was mainly channeled through American-sponsored NGO's that indirectly and over a period of time helped the Kyrgyz people see the profound faults in the Akayev regime.³⁸⁷ Bakiyev, his successor, has not introduced any major changes in the country's foreign and political allegiances. In many aspects the Kyrgyz revolution was more the outcome of the flawed parliamentary elections that triggered the wave of unrest, which ultimately led

³⁸³ Rajan Menon, 'The New Great Game in Central Asia', *Survival*, vol.45, no. 2, Summer 2003, p.190

³⁸⁴ There are numerous reasons for the Georgian revolution, but the Kyrgyz government seemed to focus the most on the point mentioned above.

³⁸⁵ Interview with Yevgenni Kablukov

³⁸⁶ Aya Telekova, 'Political Parties, Regionalism and Pre-election Campaign in Kyrgyzstan', *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, d.o 17.11.04, d.d 26.11.04, <http://www.cacianalyst.org>

³⁸⁷ Interview with Bakyt Beshimov, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, American University Central Asia, Bishkek, November 2005

to the removal of Akayev, than a revolution with a clear political and economic reform agenda. Bakiyev was once part of Akayev's government, and his political orientations differ little to the former president. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan's relationship to both Russia and America had not experienced fundamental change. America was concerned with the Kyrgyz government's approval of the views aired at the SCO summit on July 5, and Bakiyev's comments one day after his presidential victory. Soon after his electoral victory he stated that the presence of a US base and US troops in his country would be seriously re-considered.³⁸⁸ This was a shock to Washington, as Bakiyev had said before the presidential elections that no changes would be made in respect to American presence in Manas. Washington acted very quickly in light of these alarming notices made by the SCO in general and the Central Asian countries in particular. Soon after these announcements were made, Donald Rumsfeld, American Secretary of Defence, travelled to Bishkek to gain assurance that the USA's military role in the region was not going to be threatened. Rumsfeld received the assurance he had come for from Kyrgyz officials that the US base at Manas would remain as long as the situation in Afghanistan required it.³⁸⁹

The presence of US troops from Kyrgyzstan does not appear to be an issue that would anger the Kyrgyz people. What had initially upset the population was the fact that American troops were stationed in their capital without their permission. The Kyrgyz people played a very limited role in the decision-making process which led to the creation of the Manas military base. The opinion on the Kyrgyz street appears to be that the Americans are there to stay for the long haul.³⁹⁰ It is also important to point out that the older generations in Bishkek were more inclined to reject the American presence than the generation of those still at university.

Tajikistan was the third Central Asian country to be used by American forces in the war on terror. From all the Central Asian countries, Tajikistan was the most dependent on Russia for security. The Rahmonov coalition government emerged to power

³⁸⁸ [AlJazeera.Net](http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/CF974DE2-AAB3), 'Future of US Kyrgyz Base in Doubt', d.o 11.7.05, d.d 25.7.05, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/CF974DE2-AAB3>

³⁸⁹ [AlJazeera.Net](http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/AE3DFA87-A953), 'US to Keep Military Base in Kyrgyzstan', d.o 26.7.05, d.d 26.7.05, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/AE3DFA87-A953>

³⁹⁰ Interview with Iris Beybutova

primarily as a result of Russia's 201st MRD, and its participation in the cease-fire negotiations. Unsurprisingly, Tajikistan appeared to be one of the most pro-Russian countries in the CIS after 1997. Dushanbe's enthusiasm towards Washington after September 11 was particularly uncomfortable for Moscow. The Tajik government, after consulting Moscow, declared that it was willing to allow America access to its territory to help with the war on terror, even if that meant creating a US military base.³⁹¹ Although Russia gave its consent, its relationship deteriorated with Tajikistan. Their disapproval of Tajik engagement with Washington was clearly portrayed with the harassment of Tajik migrant laborers in Russia, and at times even their deportation.³⁹²

Rahmonov's persistent praise of America, and its ability to deal with the threat of terrorism was a blow to Russian pride. He spoke of the USA as the only power able to destroy the Taliban and their radicalising influence in the region, hinting that they were more capable of stabilising the region than Russia. In regards to the destruction of the Taliban regime, America was the only power able to take on this challenge.³⁹³ What has to be kept in mind is that instability was not the result of the Taliban regime solely, but also a consequence of other factors. Today, the Taliban regime has been destroyed, yet instability in Central Asia is on the rise. However, in the early months after September 11, the role of the USA as security provider was magnified as a result of the success of destroying the Taliban power base.

The USA has set up a small military base in Dushanbe. This base is not as sophisticated as the one in Kyrgyzstan and the one that used to be in Uzbekistan. The state of most airfields in Tajikistan, which were all offered to American forces, was not sufficient enough for heavy aircraft; only an airfield in Dushanbe is used for small sized operations as it has limited capacity. Rahmonov was keen to establish military-to-military contact with America, as well as intelligence sharing in regards to anti-

³⁹¹ Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, p. 90

³⁹² Zafar Abdullayev, 'Washington Pushes Economic and Strategic Cooperation with Tajikistan', *Eurasianet.org*, d.o 12.4.03, d.d 26.6.04,
<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav120403a.shtml>

³⁹³ *The Jamestown Foundation*, 'Central Asian Leaders Give Washington Full Credit', vol. 8, issue. 9, d.o 3.5.02, d.d 20.6.06
http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=30&issue_id=2406&article_id=19556

terrorist operations.³⁹⁴ Tajikistan went as far as granting US soldiers immunity from prosecution at the International Criminal Court. This further showed the Tajik government's keenness at winning American support. The consequence of this caused further damage to Tajik-Russian relations.³⁹⁵ In early 2002, in return for Tajik cooperation, the USA lifted the ban on the export of weapons to Tajikistan. Tajikistan also joined NATO's PFP programme.³⁹⁶

As a result of September 11, the USA was able to position itself in three Central Asian countries, which had previously been out of its bounds. Anchoring its military in the region allowed it not only to have a security role, but also enabled it to intersect with the political, economic and cultural dynamics of the region. Although the US military is not located in the Central Asian Caspian countries, its effect over the other Central Asian countries where it does have a physical presence has increased its overall influence on the region, and brought it closer to the Caspian Basin. In the process of fighting the war on terror, the USA had also sought to secure an important source of natural resources.³⁹⁷

President Bush's rhetoric in regards to the war on terror and his repeated notion of 'either you are with us or with the terrorists', even had an affect on the Turkmenbashi. Niyazov was the most reluctant Central Asian leader to engage with the USA in the war on terror. This was not surprising as he has been consistent in his policies of limited (or no) involvement and partnerships with any power or neighbour. Yet after some reluctance, the Turkmenbashi did allow blanket over-flight and refuelling permission on his territory. He insisted that his country only be involved in humanitarian operations; this was his way of supporting the war on terror and not being totally deprived from all the privileges that came with supporting the Americans.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁴ Raffi Khatchadourian, 'US Eyes Bases in Tajikistan', [Eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav110501a.shtml), d.o 6.11.01, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav110501a.shtml>

³⁹⁵ Abdullayev, 'Washington Pushes Economic and Strategic Cooperation with Tajikistan'

³⁹⁶ Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, p.91

³⁹⁷ Michael Cox, 'American Power Before and after September: Dizzy with Success?', *International Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 2, April 2002, pp. 261-276

³⁹⁸ Ahrari, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington', p. 164

Kazakhstan's willingness to declared its support for the war on terror equalled that of other Central Asian countries. Its loyalty and fraternity to Russia did not seem to hinder its announcements that it was going to take several steps to increase its participation in the anti-terror efforts. These declarations were intensified after Rumsfeld's visit to Astana to hold talks with his counterpart, Altynbayev, and Nazarbayev on 28 April 2002. At this meeting, Altynbayev said he would allow US and coalition aircraft to use Kazakh airspace and railways to transport humanitarian cargo. It was also decided that three Kazakh airports might become available to US aircraft in bad weather and during emergencies; Kazakhstan has already allowed over-flight rights for American and coalition aircraft heading to Afghanistan.³⁹⁹ In general, Kazakhstan played a small role in Operation Enduring Freedom. The main reason for this was due to geography; the Americans could not easily justify the need for a base there, as Kazakhstan did not border Afghanistan. In addition, the economic benefits that came with allowing an American base to be set up were not as tempting as they were for the other much poorer Central Asian countries.⁴⁰⁰ Having an American base there would have further irritated the Russians, as Kazakhstan borders Russian territory.

Kazakhstan, however, does appear to have a relatively firm bilateral defence relationship with the USA beyond the region. Other than being member of the PFP programme, it has a peacekeeping unit in Iraq called Kazbat, which could potentially put it at risk from extremists dedicated to punish all who get involved in Iraq. Its commitment to be part of the 'civilized world' in the war on terror has undeniably brought it closer to the USA. According to the Americans, Nazarbayev supported the SCO's decision to limit the role of the USA in the region because he felt victim to Russian and Chinese pressure. The Kazakhs on the other hand argued that they favoured the organisation's tough stance on the USA out of fear that 'coloured

³⁹⁹ Linda D. Kozaryn, 'Kazakhstan Offers More Supports For War On Terror', United States Department of Defense: America Forces Information Service News Articles, d.o 28.4.02, d.d 2.8.05, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2002/n04282002_200204282.html

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Vladimir Mikhailovich Zalepo, Rector of the Kazakh-American University, Almaty, November 2005

revolutions were going to spread throughout Central Asia at the instigation of the USA”.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰¹ Roger McDermott, 'Kazakhstan Questions U.S Military Role in Central Asia', Eurasia Daily Monitor, d.o 18.8.05, d.d 19.8.05, http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2370152

4.3 America's Political Influence in Central Asia

“American global power is exercised through a global system of distinctively American design that mirrors the domestic American experience. Central to that American experience is the pluralistic character of both the American society and its political system”.⁴⁰²

It is this political system described above which is of interest to this section. It is not the American values themselves that are a matter of controversy in Central Asia, or any other region of the world where the USA has tried to spread democratisation and liberal values, it is the method by which these values are implemented and spread that is of concern. The USA's efforts to spread pluralistic systems and protest against the abuse of human rights is a very honorable mission, yet it is Washington's policies to guarantee its definition of 'national interest', which has distanced it from properly implementing the rhetoric it likes to spread globally. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Central Asia, and specifically in Uzbekistan.

It is wrong to assume that this is a post-September 11 phenomena; in fact this had been the case years before the attacks on New York and Washington. As seen in the previous section, Washington's interest in Uzbekistan developed before the war on terror started. However, from the start it seemed evident that Washington's short-term strategic interests to secure energy deals and limit the regional power of Russia worked against other goals, such as the promotion of political and economic reform or the protection of human rights.⁴⁰³

The USA's blind support of Karimov has undermined its reputation as the main force behind the promotion of democracy and the guarantor of human rights. This policy of double standards has resulted in a ripple of troubling signals for other countries,

⁴⁰² Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 24

⁴⁰³ Liam Anderson and Michael Beck, 'U.S. Political Activism in Central Asia: The case of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan' (hereafter 'U.S. Political Activism'), in Gary K. Bertsch, Cassidy Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck (eds.), *Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, New York, London, 2000, p. 75

especially as America's policies in Uzbekistan are on a bilateral basis. In regards to the domestic situation in Uzbekistan (prior to September 11), Karimov appeared to have increased his hard-handed approach to any form of opposition. Thus, the USA's support of Karimov and his regime has provoked precisely the opposite outcome to the one US involvement was trying to achieve. Washington's policies, which were profoundly influenced by the Pentagon, were very much guided by the obsessive notion that Uzbekistan could act as a buffer to Russian and Iranian influences. Once it was realised that Karimov could help them achieve this, it became far more important than cracking down on his numerous abuses against his population.⁴⁰⁴ Karimov in return appeased the Americans in as many ways as he could; his most important gesture before September 2001 was his backing of the American trade embargo against Iran, aimed primarily at the sale of Russian nuclear reactors.⁴⁰⁵ Thus, competition and not cooperation had more often prevailed amongst the different powers in the Central Asian region.

As seen above, America's political and security-related involvement in Central Asia prior to September 11 appears to have been focused on Uzbekistan. After September 11, America's rhetoric on democratisation and human rights increased, as did Karimov's abuse of these very notions. The post-September 11 era witnessed a peak for competing influences over Central Asia. The USA became a major regional power as a result of the war on terror, which opened doors for other kinds of involvement, which this chapter has already dealt with or will deal with in the following section. Russia's role in the region intensified out of concern that the USA may usurp its position, as did the Islamic influence. Karimov's crack-down on all opposition, abuse of human rights, lack of any sort of political freedom and dire economic conditions, which were all happening under the supervision of the Americans, were creating a wave of Islamicisation, both secular and extremist. Islamic organisations were the perfect tools for the population to channel out its anger at the Karimov regime and its supporters. In addition, US foreign policy regarding the Islamic world was helping to

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.* p. 76

⁴⁰⁵ Fredrick S. Starr, 'Making Eurasia Stable', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no.1, January/February 1996, p. 91

fuel the already volatile Islamic situation. Therefore, Washington's involvement in Uzbekistan often appeared to be worsening the very problems it needed to solve.⁴⁰⁶

The USA's silent political role in Uzbekistan has caused global and domestic concern and criticism. The Uzbek government's narrow sanctioned form of Islam, which is approved by the US government, is responsible for many abuses. The term 'country of particular concern' is how the US government refers to countries that abuse religious freedom. The 1998 International Religious Freedom Act has sanctioned this terminology; the USA in April 2003 refused to include Uzbekistan amongst the countries of 'particular concern', regardless of the evidence that people are regularly jailed, killed and tortured for simply exercising their right to freedom of expression and religion.⁴⁰⁷ By supporting authoritarian regimes, such as that of Karimov's (for the majority of the time this thesis is concerned with), Washington was running a very high risk of losing the support of the population. Washington was in danger of finding itself in a position where it appeared to be opposing the wishes of the vast bulk of the population, consequently fuelling Islamic sentiment.⁴⁰⁸

It appears that the USA's political influence on Uzbekistan has been generally negative for the population, positive for the regime and often counter-productive for Washington. After the Andijan events, which were the turning point in Uzbek-American relations, the US State Department could no longer be silenced, nor could international criticism of Karimov's authoritarian methods. Not only were the international arena and worldwide human rights organisations appalled at the level of violence the Uzbek authorities used in dealing with the situation, they were also concerned with the role of Islam in areas of unrest such as in the Ferghana Valley. On Wednesday 18 May, a few days after the riots started, a town in the Ferghana Valley called Korasuv (this event has been discussed in more detail in the chapter looking at Islamic influences in Central Asia) was out of the hands of the Uzbek authorities and

⁴⁰⁶ Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal, 'New friends, New Fears in Central Asia', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.81, no. 2, March/April 2002, p. 61

⁴⁰⁷ Acacia Shields, 'The Meaning of Concern: Washington Indulges Uzbekistan's Atrocities', *Eurasianet.org*, d.o 27.3.03, d.d 1.8.05, http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/eav032703_pr.shtml

⁴⁰⁸ Charles William Maynes, 'America Discovers Central Asia', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 2, April/March 2003, pp. 129-130

in the hand of people that wanted to establish an Islamic state.⁴⁰⁹ Washington's ineffectiveness at promoting civil liberties and political reform in Uzbekistan were on full display.

The USA's political impact on Kyrgyzstan has been less alarming than in Uzbekistan. Akayev never aligned himself to Washington at the same level as Karimov. This predominantly Russo-centric country, which lacks the natural resources of its Uzbek neighbour, was never prioritised by any American administration. In the early years of independence this country stood out as the freest and most open in the region. Political parties for and against the regime were allowed to exist, and the press and media had more liberty than in any of Kyrgyzstan's neighbours. It was known as the 'island of democracy' for reasons already explained in the chapter dealing with the internal politics of Central Asia. Therefore, if the USA were genuinely concerned with helping to promote democratisation and reform, Kyrgyzstan should have been its main concern and focus. Yet in correspondence with its willingness to pursue reform it received very little political support, especially when compared to Uzbekistan.⁴¹⁰ The conclusion to draw is that Washington was not as concerned with democratisation as it was with its own national interests in the region.

The post-September 11 era saw the USA becoming involved in Kyrgyzstan's political affairs. This was not surprising as Washington had acquired a military presence in the country, and intensified its democratisation rhetoric globally. It could not fight the war on terror in the region without making concrete attempts at improving the political atmosphere of the countries it was involved with. Yet according to many Kyrgyz, these attempts were not always sincere. The Kyrgyz people's skepticism of American democratisation has developed from American projects set up in the country, which appear of no use to anyone except the Americans themselves. For example, in order to promote and encourage free press, printing and publishing houses have been paid for and set up by the USA. Most of these publishing houses are designed for the publication of opposition papers, such as 'Our Capital', with the pretext of encouraging the development of a multi-party system in which the opposition's views

⁴⁰⁹ C.J. Chivers, 'Uzbek Government Retakes Border Town', International Herald Tribune, 20.5.05, p. 4

⁴¹⁰ Anderson and Beck, 'U.S Political Activism', p. 85

are well known. According to the Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister, the opposition has to pay a price much higher than it can possibly afford to print and publish at these printing houses. The reason behind this high price is so the USA can recover most of the money it spent in setting up these printing houses. The end result is that no one can afford to print and publish, and so the democratisation process is a failure, but on the record the USA has set up printing houses to promote and aid the peaceful opposition, and the development of a multi-party system.⁴¹¹ In addition, the Kyrgyz government is uneasy about the US support of the opposition, no matter how peaceful their objectives may be. In general the US political involvement is not helping the opposition for reasons given above, and irritating the government, which does not appreciate the USA meddling in its internal affairs.⁴¹²

The Akayev government was generally concerned with the growing influence of America in the country. They blamed the USA for the ousting of Shevardnadze in Georgia, and believed that the USA was willing to dissolve any regime it did not like or at least provide support for the opposition to do so. Akayev was growing concerned that his turn might come if he did not appease American wishes. The USA's support of the region's hegemonic country, Uzbekistan, had also worried the Kyrgyz leadership, as Karimov had not always conducted his policies towards his neighbours in a diplomatic and civilized manner.⁴¹³

After the fall of Akayev, the American government still voiced its concern about human rights issues and democratisation but has shown even more interest with protecting the status quo of its military base at Manas. Independent human rights organisations have been engaged in discussions with Bakiyev and his government on ways to break away from Kyrgyzstan's history of human rights abuse.⁴¹⁴ Washington remained silent over the prosecution and imprisonment of one of the country's top opposition leaders-Felix Kulov. Former vice president, Kulov, became the leader of opposition party Ar-Namys and pledged to run as candidate in the 2000 presidential

⁴¹¹ Interview with Yevgenni Kablukov

⁴¹² *ibid.*

⁴¹³ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ Rachel Denber, 'Kyrgyzstan: Protecting Rights Should Top the Agenda', *Human Rights Watch*, d.o 13.4.05, d.d 2.8.05, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/04/12/kyrgz10473.html>

election. Akayev responded by introducing politically motivated charges of embezzlement in 2001. The International Helsinki Federation declared that the judiciary that convicted Kulov was under the control of the authorities, and that not only was Kulov wrongly convicted but that Kyrgyzstan had finally turned its back on the rule of law.⁴¹⁵ The Americans, even after September 11, put no pressure on Akayev to reinvestigate into the charges that sentenced Kulov to seven years in prison.

With each passing year, Niyazov navigates his country further and further away from the road to democratisation. As seen in the chapter dealing with democratisation and the internal politics of Central Asia, Turkmenistan has the most oppressive regime in the region. It is hard to believe that the USA has done anything to improve this situation. The USA is not only doing very little to change the level of authoritarianism and oppression in the country, it also seems unwilling to even outwardly criticise the policies of Niyazov. At the confirmation hearing of the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, in January 2005, she listed what the US government believed were the most tyrannical regimes in the world; Turkmenistan was absent from the list.⁴¹⁶ She announced that there remain outposts of tyranny in the world that required close attention; she then named North Korea, Iran, Cuba, Belarus, Zimbabwe and Burma.⁴¹⁷ The USA has consistently protected the Niyazov regime. On 11 May 2005, the commission on International Religious Freedom submitted recommendations to Rice on 'countries of particular concern' (CPC) in regards to the violation of religious freedom. Turkmenistan was once again mentioned as a country that should be listed on the CPC list, and once again the US officials chose to ignore this recommendation.⁴¹⁸ Although Turkmenistan is one of the least Islamic countries in Central Asia, freedom of religious expression is non-existent if it does not abide to the state norms. The Koran has been equated to Niyazov's Rukhnama, and features in mosques and prayers

⁴¹⁵ The Political Party of Kyrgyzstan Ar-Namys, 'Biography of Felix Kulov', d.o 17.3.03, d.d 2.8.05, http://www.ar-namys.org/en/view_temp.php?i=140

⁴¹⁶ Joseph Grosso, 'Faust in Central Asia', *Z Magazine: Commentary Online*, d.o June 2005, d.d 2.8.05, <http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Images/grosso0605.html>

⁴¹⁷ USA Today, 'Rice Facing Questions at Confirmation Hearing', d.o 18.2.05, d.d 2.8.05, http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-01-17-rice-hearing_x.htm

⁴¹⁸ Eurasianet.org, 'Turkmenistan Project', d.o 13-19.5.05, d.d 2.8.05, <http://www.eurasianet.org/turkmenistan.project/index.php?page=wnb/wnb050513&lang=eng>

more often than the holy book. This is a violation not only of Islam, but also of people's freedom to choose how they worship.

This special treatment of the region's worse dictator dates back to the TAP, where it was in the Clinton's administrations interest to appease the Turkmenbashi in all the ways that it could, in order to secure American interests in the TAP, which bypassed both Iran and Russia. As will be seen in the chapter related to energy resources and pipelines, Washington was even prepared to woo the Taliban to get what it wanted. It does not appear in the USA's national interest to upset the leader of one of the richest countries in gas resources. The TAP is still on the American pipeline agenda.

America's policies do not appear to be promoting religious moderation. Instead already sensitive Islamic sentiments are being fuelled. One way of avoiding this is by promoting the development of political and social initiations that could help consolidate moderate Islam. Winning the support of the Central Asian population by approaching social and political issues that affect everyday life could give Washington long-term political influence in the region.⁴¹⁹ The Tajik civil war, and the methods by which Islamic elements were dealt with in order to finally achieve peace in the country, should be a lesson to learn from. The conflict in Tajikistan, which had Islamic roots and motivations, was defused when Islamic elements and participants were legitimised by being incorporated into the governmental infrastructure. One way of doing this is by legitimising organisations like HT, which have never been proven to preach violence. By doing so their activities with other Islamic organisations, which do preach violence, can be limited. In addition, this could put a stop to their attempts at radicalising the population; the overall effect could result in creating a more stable environment, which could then be followed by reform. The Central Asian dictators do not seem likely to carry out such tasks out of their own initiative, but with US encouragement they might. The USA is showing no concern that the IRP is not being given equal opportunities of representation, and that the peace agreement of 1997, which promised them participation in the government does not fall victim to Rahmonov's increasing authoritarianism. Political and economic support is desperately

⁴¹⁹ Ahrari, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington', p. 165

needed if the coalition government is to succeed as an example of stability via political inclusion of parties that are otherwise banned.⁴²⁰ The role of the USA could be critical.

Since the end of the civil war, Tajikistan's human rights record has been appalling, like most of its neighbours. Torture and imprisonment with no trial is a common phenomenon. US foreign policy for years has failed to challenge these abuses. The USA has given its usual rhetoric of the importance of human rights and democratisation as a key to American support. The US government has maintained its relationship with Tajikistan, which is of vital geo-strategic interest, irrespective of the lack of reform. This has decreased the seriousness of Washington's human rights message, which has further provided very little incentives to tackle human rights abuse and implement reform.⁴²¹ It was hoped, by human rights organisations, that the USA's new strategic partnership with Tajikistan, after September 11 would help impose change.⁴²² This, however, does not seem to be the case; Tajikistan's human rights record remains a cause for concern.

The USA has played a limited role in Kazakhstan, which has always been regarded as a country firmly embedded in the Russo-centric sphere of influence. As explained in the chapter related to the internal politics of Central Asia, Nazarbayev, like Akayev, was known for his gentler grip on power. Political parties do function in Kazakhstan although serious opposition to the president is controlled. Freedom of press is better than in many other places, but still limited and censored by the authorities. As will be explained in chapter 6, Islamic currents are not as volatile as in Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan, but organisations such as HT do function. Many of their members are in Kazakh prisons and do not receive better treatment than in any other Central Asian prison. Torture is carried out on political and religious prisoners and the human right records cannot be praised, nor can Nazarbayev's increasing authoritarianism. Yet in 2002, Kazakhstan was officially praised by members of the US congress for its human

⁴²⁰ Rashid, *Jihad*, p. 92

⁴²¹ *Human Rights News*, 'Memorandum: US Policy in Central Asia', d.o May 2001, d.d 2.8.05, <http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/eca/uzbekistan0605-bck.htm>

⁴²² *Human Rights News*, 'Tajikistan: Background on Human Rights', d.o 5.10.01, d.d 2.8.05, <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2001/10/05/tajiki2601.htm>

rights record, freedom of religion and unrestrained media. Nazarbayev was congratulated for consolidating democracy.⁴²³

⁴²³ Official Kazakhstan, 'News 2002',
http://www.president.kz/articles/News/News.asp?Ing=en&art=news2002_january

4.4 America's Economic Influence in Central Asia

It is undisputed that America is the economic superpower, with networks that influence global economic organisations such as the WTO. It is also undisputed that all the Central Asian countries have been facing an economic crisis since independence. The USA's economic assistance, enterprises and the leverage it has over global financial organisations place it in a very advantageous position in acquiring friends and allies that are in need of financial assistance. This in theory placed Washington in a far stronger position than Moscow vis-à-vis economic influences in the region. The USA conducts its policies, in the political and economic spheres, on a bilateral basis. This is a strength for the USA but a weakness for the Central Asian countries that need cohesive regional policies. The bilateral focus of US assistance causes greater divisions in the region, and a lack of motivation for countries to work together. The region needs to work as one entity in order to enhance the overall security, and consolidate decent levels of political and economic reform. Even attempts at creating regional groupings are done under the aegis of global organisations. For example, Centrasbat is a trans-regional grouping, which exists under the context of NATO's PFP; it is not a regional collectivity.⁴²⁴ Bilateralism is particularly unpopular in Kazakhstan, where Nazarbayev is the greatest advocator of unions and collectivities as was shown by his enthusiasm for the creation of the CIS and other regional organisations. Russia's focus, as seen in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia, is on creating regional collectivities, which strengthen the region's political, security and economic infrastructure. Regional organisations such as the CSTO and CACO/EurAsEC are what the USA has lacked to create. Russia's focus is more towards regionalisation, while the USA prefers transnational methods at tackling Central Asian issues. It is hard to see room for cooperation between these two influences when their vision of the region differs so greatly.

The USA's bilateral strategy is very clearly seen with its economic policies in Central Asia. Washington does not enhance the development of economic integration or

⁴²⁴ Macfarlane, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', pp.455-458

cooperative economic reform; it works individually with each country giving each one different amounts of assistance. The consequence of this has often created tension amongst the regional countries and a tendency for unilateralism, especially by Uzbekistan, which has enjoyed the largest bulk of US economic assistance.⁴²⁵

The amount of assistance given to Uzbekistan greatly increased after the war on terror, but even prior to that the country had enjoyed preferential treatment from Washington. In 1994 the USA and Uzbekistan entered a bilateral agreement of 'Most Favoured Nation' (MFN) status. In 1998, the USA donated an additional \$19 million to further market reforms and economic bilateral ties. This created a more favourable environment for US investments.⁴²⁶ According to William Maynes, the president of the Eurasia foundation, the amount of US aid to Uzbekistan after September 11 and before Andijan skyrocketed.⁴²⁷ By 2002 the amount of financial aid had reached \$160 million.⁴²⁸ The aid given to the Karimov regime was intended for security purposes, military training and equipment, as well as for the resuscitation of the fragile economy.⁴²⁹ As a result of the Andijan events, US financial aid has been greatly reduced and the K2 military base officially closed at the end of 2005.⁴³⁰

US financial aid to Kyrgyzstan also dramatically increased after September 11. Most of the foreign investment prior to the war on terror did not come from American sources. This country, which became of vital geo-strategic interest after the war on terror, received (before 2001) almost the same amount of American aid as Senegal or Malawi.⁴³¹ The creation of an American military base was one way Kyrgyzstan was guaranteed economic help. The base provides for the greatest source of foreign investment in Kyrgyzstan; it adds approximately \$50 million to the Kyrgyz economy

⁴²⁵ *ibid.* p. 458

⁴²⁶ Anderson and Beck, 'US Political Activism in Central Asia', pp. 85-86

⁴²⁷ William Maynes, 'U.S should Proceed Cautiously in Uzbekistan to Avoid a Political Explosion', *Council of Foreign Relations*, d.o 1.4.04, d.d 4.8.05, <http://www.cfr.org/publication.php?id=6914>

⁴²⁸ Rosemary Foot, *Human Rights and Counter-terrorism in America's Asia Policy*, Oxford, New York, 2004, p. 35

⁴²⁹ Luong and Weinthal, 'New Friends, New Fears in Central Asia', p. 62

⁴³⁰ *BBC News*, 'US Confirms Uzbek Base Departure', d.o 27.9.05, d.d 17.7.06, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4288280.stm>

⁴³¹ Anderson and Beck, 'US Political Activism in Central Asia', p. 86

each year.⁴³² After the American eviction from K2 in Uzbekistan, the importance of the Manas base has become even more prominent; this has allowed the Bakiyev regime to ask for more money in return for the continuation of an American presence in the country.⁴³³ In July 2006, American concerns regarding the future of the Manas base were finally settled and a deal was made securing the continuation of the US military base. The United States and Kyrgyzstan agreed on long-term strategic cooperation and a joint commitment to fight the war on terror and improving security in the region. The Bakiyev government appeared to have also succeeded in making Washington pay more for the base. Washington is now expected to provide more than \$150 million in rent and assistance over the next year.⁴³⁴

In spite of the USA's initial disinterest in Kyrgyzstan, it remains the only Central Asian country belonging to the WTO; it officially joined on October 14, 1998. America and the EU promoted Kyrgyzstan to membership status. Washington is also supporting the bid for membership of the other Central Asian countries (except Turkmenistan).⁴³⁵ Belonging to the WTO is one step closer towards economic globalisation.

As with assistance in the political sphere, according to some Kyrgyz, economic assistance is of benefit mainly to the leadership, and the political elites. Although most Kyrgyz acknowledge the fact that their country receives more economic aid from the USA than from any other country, including Russia, there is a general bitterness that the Americans are not too concerned where this money is directed.

Tajikistan, along with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan was one of the three Central Asian countries that received the most amount of economic aid from the USA after their support of the war on terror.⁴³⁶ Tajikistan's importance to the USA lies in its geo-

⁴³² Council on Foreign Relations, 'Asia: U.S Military Bases in Central Asia'

⁴³³ Patrick Goodenough, 'Great Game Heats Up in Central Asia', [CNSNEWS.COM](http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewForeignBureaus.asp?Page=/ForeignBureaus/archive/200605/INT20060531a.htm), d.o 31.5.06, d.d 2.6.06, <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewForeignBureaus.asp?Page=/ForeignBureaus/archive/200605/INT20060531a.htm>

⁴³⁴ David Sands, 'U.S, Kyrgyzstan Reach Deal on Air Base Payment', [The Washington Times](http://washingtontimes.com/world/20060714-100731-3908r.htm), d.o 15.7.06, d.d 16.7.06, <http://washingtontimes.com/world/20060714-100731-3908r.htm>

⁴³⁵ Macfarlane, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', p. 458

⁴³⁶ Ahrari, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington', p. 163

strategic location. It shares a large border with Afghanistan, and many of the prominent members of the Northern Alliance were of Tajik ethnicity. Rahmonov was aware that support and assistance to the USA in its operation in Afghanistan meant American economic aid in return; economic aid of the sort that Russia could not provide. Shortly after September 11 this war-torn country, which received very little attention or assistance during its years of civil conflict, suddenly became the host of top American officials. On 6 November the deputy assistant to the US Secretary of State, M. Lynn Pascoe, and Rahmonov met in Dushanbe to discuss the new American-Tajik relationship and the situation in the region. Rahmonov was quick to tell Pascoe of his interest in establishing a strong trade and economic relationship between their countries.⁴³⁷ The Tajik leadership has clearly recognised the potential economic and political assets that cooperation with the USA entailed. In 2002, the USA gave Tajikistan \$140.5 million in assistance.⁴³⁸ One of the many goals the US military had in deploying its troops in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan was to create a military counterweight to the Russian presence in Tajikistan.⁴³⁹ After September 11, Rahmonov was seen to drift away from the Russia fold, but since then, Russia has redeveloped its relationship with Tajikistan. As explained in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia, Tajikistan reaffirmed its strong ties with Russia, by allowing it (much to the disappointment of Washington) to set up a military base on its soil. This was one of many incidents where the competition between the USA and Russia over Central Asian support became prominent.

As will be discussed in the chapter related to energy resources and pipelines in Central Asia, America is keen to anchor itself as a major oil player in the region. This has ultimately meant that oil-rich Kazakhstan has been a large recipient of US economic investments. The USA's economic relationship with Astana was not triggered off by the war on terror but by the development of petro-politics since the early 1990's. It is estimated that between 1993-2003, Kazakhstan attracted around \$2.5 billion from US

⁴³⁷ Tajikistan: Information Resource, 'Emomali Rahmonov Met the Deputy Assistant to the U.S Secretary of State', d.o 7.1101, d.d 21.7.05, <http://tajikistan.tajnet.com/english/news/an07112001.htm>

⁴³⁸ Zafar Abdullayev, 'Washington Pushes Economic and Strategic Cooperation with Tajikistan', Eurasianet, d.o 12.04.03, d.d 26.6.04, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav120403a.shtml>

⁴³⁹ Murat T. Laumulin, Central Asian and the West: The Geopolitical Impact on Regional Security, Almaty, 2004, p. 41

foreign investments.⁴⁴⁰ Nazarbayev acknowledges the fact that his country has much to gain from American investments and projects, yet at the same time has treaded carefully not to upset Moscow by getting too involved in American projects. In May 2005, Nazarbayev's multi-vectored policies in the energy field swung in favour of the USA. The temptation to join the westbound B-T-C pipeline was a decision the USA had long hoped for. This decision has, nevertheless, not been made official (this will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter)

Although Kazakhstan has not been as much of an active participant in the war on terror as its neighbours mentioned above, it has seen a vast amount of American economic support since independence. In March 2002, the US Department of Commerce (DOC) gave Kazakhstan market economy status under US trade law. This status confirms that according to Washington, Kazakhstan has undergone substantive market economy reforms.⁴⁴¹ Yet Kazakhstan's substantive economic reforms remain controversial, as its privatization policies are often described as deeply flawed.⁴⁴² However, it is undisputed that Kazakhstan has made giant steps in economic reform in comparison to its neighbours and with the help of US assistance.

Turkmenistan, like Kazakhstan, received less aid aimed at economic reform than the other Central Asian countries. US finances are funnelled through more energy-related issues and projects. Turkmenistan's policy of positive neutrality has prevented it from becoming a battleground for competing influences. Turkmenistan has neither been a hotspot for Islamic extremism, although the Turkmenbashi's grip on the media and society may be brewing a danger yet to be seen. Regardless of Niyazov's isolationist tendencies, he has been keen to promote his country's economic sector and gas export opportunities. This has been discussed in more detail in the chapter related to energy resources and pipelines in Central Asia. His willingness to engage with the outside world for the sake of promoting his energy sphere, and his support of the war on terror has made him a friend to the USA. As previously explained, the USA prefers to avoid

⁴⁴⁰ Ibragim Alibekov, 'Kazakhstan Tilts Towards Russia', [Eurasianet.org](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav021804a.shtml), d.o 18.2.04, d.d 2.8.05, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav021804a.shtml>

⁴⁴¹ U.S Department of State, 'Kazakhstan', d.o April 2005, d.d 2.8.05, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5487.htm>

⁴⁴² Macfarlane, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', p.457

issues of democratisation and human rights and concentrates on issues of mutual interest. Although Turkmenistan has often been describes as having one of the most oppressive regimes in the world, the then Secretary of State Colin Powell described US-Turkmen relations as 'very strong'.⁴⁴³ It is clear that the USA has national interests to pursue, which ultimately are also of economic benefit to Ashghabad.

⁴⁴³ Colin Powell, 'U.S Embassy Welcomes Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy to Turkmenistan', United States Mission in Turkmenistan, d.o October 2001, d.d 5.8.05, <http://www.usemb-ashgabat.usia.co.at/archive/newsletter5.html>

4.5 America's Impact on Central Asian Culture and Society

The impact of any power, whether Russian, Islamic or American, on society and culture is very difficult to measure. The impact of Americanisation, which often translates as globalisation is even more difficult, as it has not had as much time to root itself into Central Asian society as the other two influences. Importing globalisation and seeing the effects it has on certain cultures is a long-term process, but its seeds have already been sown in Central Asian society. The United States cultural impact is not something that ought to be underestimated simply because of its embryonic state in Central Asia. Brzezinski says, "Cultural domination has been an under-appreciated facet of American global power. Whatever one may think of its aesthetic values, American mass culture exercises a magnetic appeal, especially on the world's youth. Its attraction may be derived from the hedonistic quality of the lifestyle it projects, but its global appeal is undeniable".⁴⁴⁴

Although Uzbekistan's foreign policy orientations have been more pro-American than any of its neighbours, the effects of American culture are not very prominent on Uzbek society. Even after decades of Russian cultural influence, Uzbekistan is not one of the most Russified countries in the region. Uzbek society holds firmly onto its traditional character and religion. The American way of life, and way of thinking will take very long before it has a prominent impact on Uzbek society. McDonalds, Starbucks and other symbols of globalisations are not evident in the Uzbek capital, and seem light years away from existing in places such as Samarkand and Bukhara. Nevertheless, some elements of Americanisation have reached Uzbekistan; American films are available as is American music. Most often, however, the music being played in the numerous bazaars and coffee shops in Uzbekistan is Uzbek, Russian, Turkish or Arabic.⁴⁴⁵ American global industries such as Coca-Cola found their way into Central Asia soon after independence. It is estimated that Coca-Cola is one of the largest

⁴⁴⁴ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 25

⁴⁴⁵ This information is a result of personal observation

foreign investors in Uzbekistan.⁴⁴⁶ English, although the language of the Internet, is barely spoken and there exists a feeling amongst many Uzbeks that the Americans are 'different'.

Although the Kyrgyz people, especially in the north, are less ethnically traditional in their mannerisms than the Uzbeks (this is the result of behavioral Russification) and less religious, there generally remains a feeling of mistrust towards America. It is important to remember that Central Asia was profoundly Sovietised, and the Soviet identity was not frowned upon; therefore it remains difficult for many to relax with elements of Americanisation. For example, the American presence in the Kyrgyz capital caused frenzy amongst the Kyrgyz farmers as they blamed their bad potato crop on the Americans. They were certain that the troops were using some sort of chemicals at their base in Manas, which was damaging their potatoes. The Kyrgyz felt an even larger divide between them and the Americans when American soldiers ran over two Kyrgyz students from the National State University in broad daylight. It was reported that the soldiers were not concerned with killing two young people. This caused outrage in Bishkek.⁴⁴⁷

In spite of this, American culture and education remains popular. Kyrgyzstan has the only American University in Central Asia in its capital. The American University in Bishkek tries to bring its students closer to the American way of thinking. The general attitude amongst the staff at the university is that Kyrgyzstan should start looking to the USA for guidance and distance itself from Russia. Twenty percent of the students at this university are ethnic Russians.⁴⁴⁸ It is believed that the quickest and most effective way to embrace democratisation is to allow the USA to guide Kyrgyzstan towards it in whatever way is possible.⁴⁴⁹ The curriculum is American, and fluency in English is compulsory. Its roots started with the creation of the Kyrgyz American

⁴⁴⁶ Muslim Uzbekistan, 'When the Coca-Coal Wars came to Uzbekistan', d.o 21.12.01, d.d 5.8.05, <http://www.muslimuzbekistan.com/eng/ennews/2001/08/ennews30082001.html>

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Iris Beybutova

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Bakyt Beshimov

⁴⁴⁹ Beshimov argued that when it came to competing influences, America was the strongest power in Kyrgyzstan because the Kyrgyz could see a future for themselves in a country guided by American values. He also stressed that the younger generation embraced elements of 'Americanisation' as the key to a modern and advanced future. It is also important to note that the American State pays all members of staff, including Beshimov.

Schools, which became the American University in 1997. One of its main funding bodies is the US State Department.⁴⁵⁰ It is generally hoped that those graduating from this university will help narrow the gap between Kyrgyz and American values and habits. Obvious symbols of globalisation such as KFC and other fast food restaurants do not exist, although in 1996 Coca-Cola paid \$16 million to locate itself in Bishkek.⁴⁵¹

The effects of globalisation in Kazakhstan tell a similar story to that of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Symbols of globalisation are hardly seen in major cities. Popular food is Turkish, Chinese, Russian and Kazakh (which in some ways is a combination of the other three); burgers, sausages and other American styled food are only found in international hotels.⁴⁵² The higher standards of living, and the slightly more liberal political system in comparison to some of the other Central Asian countries means that the average Kazakh is more capable of having regular Internet access and satellite television (non-Kazakh or Russian channels). This will have some form of impact on the younger generations, which are ultimately living in a more globalised Kazakhstan. Nazarbayev talks about globalisation characterising the new post-ideological era, and says that the current generation (in Kazakhstan) will decide what form globalisation will take.⁴⁵³

English is Kazakhstan's third language after Russian and Kazakh and there also exists an American University in Almaty that promotes the use of the English language and helps to bring the two cultures closer.⁴⁵⁴ What is ironic about this University is that although it calls itself the 'Kazakh-American University' (KAU) and has the American flag at its entrance, it is in fact not an American University at all. It calls itself 'American' with the permission of the American government. Unlike the University in

⁴⁵⁰ American University-Central Asia, d.d 5.8.05, <http://www.auca.kg/about/history>

⁴⁵¹ CILICA: Armenia (Dow Jones News), 'Coca-Cola to Invest \$200 Million in Asia, Caucasus Region', d.o 5.7.96 d.d 5.8.05, <http://www.cilicia.com/armo3d1.html>

⁴⁵² This information is a result of personal observations. The Kazakhs have their own version of big western fast-food chains, for example they have a 'King Burger', which is very similar to 'Burger King' but is Kazakh.

⁴⁵³ Nazarbayev, 'Welcome Speech at the 4th Eurasia Media Forum', [Eurasia Media Forum](http://www.eamedia.org/2005/kns/01.php), d.o 21.4.05, d.d 2.8.05, <http://www.eamedia.org/2005/kns/01.php>

⁴⁵⁴ Kazakh-American University, <http://www.itte.kz/client/KAU>

Bishkek, it neither receives funding nor was set up by the USA.⁴⁵⁵ The University is a private Kazakh University aimed at providing education for students in English. The classes that are not taught in English are taught in Russian. According to Kazakh education laws, 75% of any higher education curriculum has to follow the Kazakh educational system, which has set programs and courses. This allows Universities to dedicate the remaining 25% of the curriculum on whatever subjects they want. The KAU has used the remaining 25% of the curriculum on American subjects, such as American history and American law.⁴⁵⁶ Inevitably the KAU produces a cadre of young Kazakhs that are more American oriented than students at other Universities. This is not because the government is promoting such attitudes, but because the Kazakhs that send their children to the University want them to be susceptible and accepting to American notions and values. American culture is popular amongst the students of the KAU, for many going to study in the USA is what they strive for. Ultimately there is a lot of focus on American music, American clothes, learning English etc. Many of these young people do not have a great interest in politics; they do not associate American culture with American foreign policy.⁴⁵⁷

American education, which is one of the strongest long-term tools for having any impact on a society, is something the American government is keen to promote. There exist six 'EducationUSA' centres in Kazakhstan. EducationUSA is a global network aimed at advising, giving information and promoting higher education in the United States. These centres exist throughout Central Asia, and are most numerous in Kazakhstan. The Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the U.S Department of State supports EducationUSA. This gives many Kazakh youngsters the opportunity to get western education, and expand their knowledge of other cultures and other 'worlds'; it also brings their way of thinking closer to the American way. While the older generations in Central Asia still openly declare that 'the Americans are from a

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Gulnara Kusaienova, Head of International Relations Department, The Kazakh-American University, Almaty, November 2005

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Vladimir Mikhailovich Zalepo, Rector of Kazakh-American University, Almaty November 2005

⁴⁵⁷ Interview with Sidlana Chin, Vice Rector of Kazakh-American University, Almaty, November 2005

different planet'⁴⁵⁸, the younger generation, especially if they have received some form of American education, could be more accepting of American culture.

The last two Central Asian countries appear far from being affected by American culture or globalisation. Tajikistan having endured a civil war for most of its independent years, which the Americans did not play a role in, appears unprepared for elements of globalisation. America's mass culture in this ethnically Persian, highly Islamic and troubled country is not likely to flourish (in the near future) no matter how strong American ties may become with Rahmonov and his intelligentsia. Turkmenistan also appears distant from the temptations of imitating the American way of life however, American organisations, such as the Peace Corps are active in Turkmenistan and primarily teach English.⁴⁵⁹ The Rukhnama, which Niyazov wants his people to follow, is not compatible with the American way of thinking. In addition, Niyazov has many thoughts on why globalisation is not something that should be over promoted. He argues that it is wrong to think that there should not be alternative political philosophies to globalisation, and that universal standards for the entire human race should not be limited by one trend.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Iris Beybutova

⁴⁵⁹ A friend of mine has come across members of the Peace Corps in the most remote Turkmen villages teaching English. He was told that the Peace Corps is very active in Turkmenistan and is one of the few American organisations the Turkmen people come in contact with.

⁴⁶⁰ Niyazov, 'Turkmenistan's President makes Comprehensive Policy Statement on the Eve of the UN Millennium Summit', Turkmenistan Embassy Press Release, d.o 21.8.00, d.d 8.8.05, <http://www.turkmenistanembassy.org/turkmen/news/pressrelease.html>

4.6 Conclusion

Throughout the 1990's, the USA had been relatively active in the region on a number of fronts. It promoted its security role via organisations such as NATO's PFP programme, and Centrasbat. It has equally been generous economically, especially in Kazakhstan, where the USA has been interested in promoting the country's economy and energy sphere. America's relationship with Uzbekistan prior to the war on terror show the growing need for Washington to find a political ally in the region. In the late 1990's it was predominantly in Uzbekistan where the competing influences of Russia, Islam and America clashed the most. America's bilateral ties with Uzbekistan were seen to undermine Russia's role in the region. The growth of Islamic forces in Uzbekistan, which were also present in other Central Asian countries, further revealed how the region was developing into a battle-ground for different competing influences. By 2001, Islam had become an underlying force, creating one of the largest threats for the ruling regimes, and used as a remedy to deal with the worsening political and socio-economic environment by certain elements of the population. The events of September 11 opened a new chapter for American involvement, in addition to bringing it physically to the heart of the region. The USA started developing a web of influences covering security, political, economic and cultural policies in all of the Central Asian countries. Thus, the post-September 11 era saw an intensification of competition in Central Asia. According to the Central Asian specialist, Mehrdad Haghayeghi from the Missouri State University, America has made a profound contribution to the intensification of power politics, and the USA's pursuit of unilateral policies has understandably put Russia on the offensive.⁴⁶¹ In addition, American involvement is also having a radicalising effect on Islam, creating an overall arena of competition and rivalry.⁴⁶² America's growing influence appears to have been the trigger which reincarnated the 'Great Game' of the 19th century, this time involving Russia, Islam and America. The balance of America's security-based, political,

⁴⁶¹ Mehrdad Haghayeghi quoted by Todd Diamond, 'US Unilateralism Fuels Great Power Politics for Rivalry in central Asia', International Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research, d.o 1.10.03, d.d 15.8.05, http://iicas.org/libr_en/geopolit/01_10_03.htm

⁴⁶² Jim Nichol, 'Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests', Current Politics and Economics of Russia, Eastern and Central Europe, vol.18, no.8, 2003, p. 414

economic and cultural influences in Central Asian differ greatly from country to country. Certain influences are stronger in some countries than in others, depending on the geo-political and geo-economic dynamics of each country. Washington's weakest and most counter-productive influences are in politics and culture. As seen above, America's policies at promoting democratisation have been generally unsuccessful⁴⁶³ and have caused further instability, such as strengthening the authoritarian leaders, consequently creating a wider platform for the Islamists to win support from the oppressed population. America's political influence is also associated with triggering revolutions aimed at removing existing governments. Russification and Islamic culture (at present) cast a stronger shadow over Central Asian identity than American culture. Thus politics and culture prevent a large bulk of the population from supporting the growth of America's competing influences.

⁴⁶³ Erin Trough, 'Security Dilemmas in Central Asia: Competition for Influence', Kennan Institute: Meeting Report, vol.11, no.4, 2003, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1424&fuseaction=topics.publications&doc_id=41080&group_id=7718

5.0 The Energy Resource Dimension

5.1 Resource Wars and Petro-Politics

“Although the Middle East, containing 65.7% of proven oil reserves, will remain crucial in oil supply in the coming decades, the world oil balance might be challenged by the new resources that are uncovered in Central Asia”.⁴⁶⁴

This chapter mainly looks at Russian and American competition over the energy resources of the two Central Asian Caspian littoral countries-Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. A vast amount of the region's wealth lies in the Caspian sections belonging to these two countries, therefore, this chapter looks at how this wealth is being exploited, and how this is affecting the geo-political balance in the region. The first sub-section will aim at explaining the status of the Caspian Sea, and how this affects each of the five littoral countries. Sub-sections two and three will look at the two Central Asian Caspian countries, and analyse the level and type of cooperation and dependency that exists between them and the USA and Russia. The last sub-sections will look at the remaining three Central Asian countries, and discuss their contribution (if any) to the petro-politics of the region, and the resource war between the USA and Russia.

Despite over a decade of independence and the temptations of regional and non-regional powers to exploit the riches of the Caspian, it has remained relatively untouched and undiscovered. One of the main reasons that brought Central Asia to the forefront of international affairs is its undisputed and untapped hidden wealth. September 11 has pushed the USA into seeking alternative energy supplies to those from the Middle East. The effects of September 11 rippled throughout the world, and had a particularly negative impact on Saudi Arabia. One of the reasons for this was that almost all the hijackers were of Saudi origin. September 11 not only affected

⁴⁶⁴ Mehdi Parvizi Amineh, Towards the Control of the Oil Resources in the Caspian Region (hereafter Control of the Oil Resources), New York, 1999, p. 26

the Kingdom's international reputation, especially in the eyes of its most important economic partner-the USA, but also caused damage to Saudi society.⁴⁶⁵

The escalation of tension between these two countries led to Donald Rumsfeld announcing that the USA would withdraw 7,000 US military personnel from Saudi Arabia, thus terminating a significant military presence in the Kingdom that had lasted over a decade.⁴⁶⁶ The bruised American-Saudi relationship encouraged Washington to look elsewhere for new petroleum and gas allies. This further led it to Central Asia and the Caspian region.⁴⁶⁷ The USA's orientation towards the natural resources of the Caspian region could be the start of a gradual withdrawal or at least a move away from the level of dependency Washington has on the energy resources of the Arabian Gulf.

Central Asia and the Caspian region may not have the amount of energy resources that Saudi Arabia possesses, but the region, as previously stated, appears to be a comfortable relocation for American business and resource ambitions. The Caspian region has larger gas reserves than Saudi Arabia but its oil reserves are much less. Oil reserves from the entire region are approximately 18-35 billion barrels,⁴⁶⁸ while Saudi Arabia's proved oil reserves are approximately 260 billion barrels.⁴⁶⁹ In fact, it has often been argued that one of the main reasons, if not the only reason that the USA has decided to stay in Central Asia after the downfall of the Taliban regime, is because it wants to root itself as one of the region's major oil extracting and exporting powers. According to Laumulin, "access to energy drives all US policy in the region".⁴⁷⁰ America's military presence in Kyrgyzstan (and formally in Uzbekistan) has ultimately given it a role over the internal affairs of the country (countries) and also a certain amount of influence over the region (this has been covered in the previous chapter on

⁴⁶⁵ J. E Peterson, Saudi Arabia and the Illusion of Security (hereafter Saudi Arabia), London, New York, 2002, 63-64

⁴⁶⁶ Stephen J. Hedges, 'Military to Leave Saudi Arabia: U.S Moving Amid Strained Relations', Global Security.org: Chicago Tribune, d.o 30.4.03, d.d 11.4.05, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/org/news/2003/030430-psab01.htm>

⁴⁶⁷ Murat T. Laumulin, Central Asia and the West: The Geopolitical Impact on the Regional Security, Almaty, 2004, p. 39

⁴⁶⁸ Caspian Environment Programme, 'General Background', d.o 7.11.04, d.d 22.7.06, <http://www.caspianenvironment.org/caspian.htm>

⁴⁶⁹ Energy Information Administration, 'Saudi Arabia', d.o August 2005, d.d 22.7.06, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/saudi.html>

⁴⁷⁰ Laumulin, Central Asia and the West: The Geopolitical Impact on the Regional Security, p. 14

American influences in Central Asia). The USA's rhetoric in regard to democratisation and reform, not only in Central Asia but also in other parts of the former Soviet Union, and the American approved revolutions in both Ukraine and Georgia have enabled the USA to be regarded as a powerful player in the region.

Bahgat accurately points out the USA's need for energy resources when he says, "with less than three percent of the world's proven reserves and a share of one quarter of global consumption, the United States is the world's largest oil importer".⁴⁷¹ After the disintegration of the USSR, the USA slowly started to promote itself as a potential investor and importer of Caspian riches. In 1998, Richard Morningstar- an advisor to the President and Assistant Secretary of State for Caspian Basin energy diplomacy- highlighted the USA's objectives in the region, which often did not favour Russia. The USA was primarily concerned with enhancing commercial opportunities for American companies and promoting the energy independence of the Caspian region.⁴⁷² The US strategy often goes against Russian interests. Russia does not like to see its energy monopoly of the region challenged, and it definitely does not want the other Caspian littoral countries able to transport their resources through non-Russian pipelines that bypass Russian territory.⁴⁷³ According to Blandy, "Perhaps the most dangerous factor which could initiate a course of miscalculation and precipitate collision lies in the uneasy and sometimes antagonising relationship between the United States and Russia, for stemming from this position, in and around the Caucasus-Caspian region it is possible to hold the view in a very general sense that there are two groups of loosely defined political alliances headed by the USA on the one hand and Russia on the other".⁴⁷⁴ Although Putin has stated that he wishes for Western companies to work with Russian ones, neither side would like to see the other becoming too influential in the region. It remains the case that both Russia and the USA have different strategies

⁴⁷¹ Gawdat Bahgat, 'Managing Dependence: American-Saudi Oil Relations', Arab Studies Quarterly, vol. 23, no. 1, winter 2001, p. 1

⁴⁷² Jan S. Adams, 'The US-Russian Face-Off in the Caspian Basin' (hereafter 'US-Russian Face-Off'), Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 47, no. 1, January/February 2000, p. 52

⁴⁷³ Stephen Blank, 'The United States and Central Asia', in Allison and Jonson (eds.) Central Asian Security, p. 130

⁴⁷⁴ C W Blandy, 'The Caspian: Commintory Crosscurrents', Conflict Studies Research Centre, January 1999, p.10-11

and objectives that they would like to follow in the Caspian region, which are favourable to their own national interests, and therefore competition will never die out.

The energy producing Caspian countries, and especially American companies have much to gain from the construction of pipelines that are not northbound, i.e. those that avoid Russia. Westbound pipelines, i.e. those that travel through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey ensure that the region's oil and gas reaches western markets at full commercial prices.⁴⁷⁵ Russia has much to gain from importing Central Asian energy at less than world prices; this permits it to export more of its own resources to Europe at world market prices.⁴⁷⁶ Caspian energy resources can also be directed southeast bound, i.e. towards Iran, Afghanistan and China- these countries are generally experiencing energy shortages. Southeast bound pipelines are the most cost-effective, but are politically undesirable to the US policy makers. Most of the energy diverted to Iran comes from either Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan. This will be covered in more detail in the sub-sections related to these countries. The USA is trying to promote westbound routes. It is important to remember that the reasons for constructing pipelines that travel through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey are not purely economic but also political.⁴⁷⁷ This highlights the competition that is being played out in the region by the USA and Russia.

Even before September 11, the USA's desperate need for energy resources had placed it as a potential Russian competitor over the resources of the Caspian Sea. As was seen in previous chapters, Russia, since September 11, has consequently reactivated its role in the region. This has meant greater participation in the region's energy sphere; hence Russian oil and gas companies have turned their focus to Central Asia. Guseynov agrees with this point, and emphasises that in 2001 the geo-political situation in Central Asia was starting to threaten Russia's traditional role, especially as the war on the Taliban brought American military bases to the region, and the United States started seeking closer cooperation with the Central Asian countries in the political and

⁴⁷⁵ John Roberts, *Caspian Pipelines*, London, 1996, p.5

⁴⁷⁶ Jim Nichol, 'Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests', *Current Politics and Economics of Russia, Eastern and Central Europe*, vol. 18, no. 5, 2003, New York, p. 426

⁴⁷⁷ C W Blandy, *The Caspian: Commnatory Crosscurrents*, p. 17

economic sphere; as a result Russian energy firms stepped up their activities.⁴⁷⁸ The American invasion of Iraq has caused concern to some of the littoral countries that had hoped that American investors would pump their money into the region in return for energy deals. The Middle East in comparison to the Caspian region remains better connected to world markets, and has a far more accessible and less politicised pipeline infrastructure. In the case of Iraq, the pipeline infrastructure and energy reservoirs are more under the control and influence of the USA than is the case in the Caspian region. The opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (this will be discussed in more detail below) in May 2005 is the start of the Caspian region becoming less isolated and better connected to the western world.

Russia has been in a position of power in the Caspian mainly because most functioning pipelines are Soviet built, and travel through Russian land. In the past the energy resources of the different Soviet Republics were all linked to the internal Soviet network; today Russia still processes a monopoly over this network. Therefore, the easiest and cheapest way that energy resources from Central Asia can reach world markets is by travelling along Russian controlled pipelines. The Caspian countries did not initially attract many investors because they were landlocked, and badly connected to ports that could enable the transportation of their natural resources. Foreign companies and investors were deterred from making plans to broaden the export routes of the Caspian for a variety of reasons. One of them was a direct result of the unstable nature of the regimes in the region, and the extent to which individuals in these regimes are ready to violate, and abrogate existing agreements in order to suit their own personal interests. This has resulted in a bad reputation regarding foreign investment laws, which has scared many western companies away (this will be covered in more detail below). Construction of new pipelines is very costly and often involves verbal wars with environmental organisations; these organisations highlight the damage that new pipelines cause to the environment, and to people and animals that become affected by their construction. American sanctions against Iran have

⁴⁷⁸ Rauf Guseynov, 'Russian Energy Companies in Central Asia' (hereafter 'Russian Energy Companies'), *Central Asian and the Caucasus*, no. 5(29), 2004, pp. 60-61

further complicated the investment situation.⁴⁷⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that prior to September 11, the Arabian Gulf seemed an easier option for investments, as it was well connected to world markets. However, events in the international arena have given the Caspian region the opportunity to become a major player in the oil and gas-exporting world. According to Blank, “not only are Central Asia and the Caucasus integral parts of the global war on terror, they are fast becoming pivotal actors in the global energy economy”.⁴⁸⁰

5.1.1 The Status of the Caspian and its Division

One of the major obstacles facing the five littoral countries- Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Iran- over the development and exploitation of the Caspian has been their lack of agreement over the status of the waters they share. Since the disintegration of the USSR, questions have risen regarding the status of the Caspian Sea and its seabed. The Caspian is a landlocked body of water; until 1991 its status was undisputed between its two littoral countries, Iran and the Soviet Union. Throughout the Soviet era two bilateral agreements were signed between these two countries that prevented any escalation of tension. One was the 1921 Iranian-Soviet friendship treaty. This treaty gave equal access to the sea to both countries. The second bilateral treaty was in 1940, which reiterated the common use of the Caspian. These two treaties clarified that both countries could freely navigate throughout the Caspian waters, and that all resources were to be shared. It is important to remember that at the time the treaties were signed, natural resources referred more to fish stocks than oil and gas.⁴⁸¹ This was a major area of concern after 1991, when it became evident that the five littoral countries were not interested in equally sharing the resources of the Caspian, therefore the new littoral countries did not want to be bound by the old Soviet-Iranian agreements. What the new Caspian countries want, and this was very much supported by the USA, is to divide the seabed and its natural resources into five unequal sections corresponding to the coastal length of each country-in other words the

⁴⁷⁹ Shirin Akiner, ‘Politics of Energy in the Caspian Sea’ (hereafter ‘Politics of Energy’), Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia 2002, second edition, London, 2001, p.13

⁴⁸⁰ Stephen Blank, ‘The Future of Caspian Security’, Problems of Post-Communism, vol.50, no. 1 January/Feb 2003, p. 15

⁴⁸¹ Lutz Kleveman, The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia (hereafter Blood and Oil), London, 2003, p.146

Caspian Sea was to be divided along a median line. According to Haghayeghi, “the lop-sidedness of this distribution based on the length of the coastline and a modified equidistance line, compelled Iran and, until recently Russia to vehemently object to the principle of national delimitation”.⁴⁸² Russia has since changed its opinion after discovering an oil field in its section of the Caspian, and after realising that compromise was essential if the littoral countries were to develop the untapped treasures of the Caspian.⁴⁸³

The littoral countries (excluding Iran) have overridden the agreements made between the Soviet Union and Iran; this has consequently meant that they approve of the applicability of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. If this were not applicable then the Caspian would be treated as a lake, meaning that the pre-1991 agreements between Iran and the Soviet Union would be still valid.⁴⁸⁴ Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (and later Russia) have made it very clear that they accept the 1982 Convention, and believe that it is applicable to the Caspian Sea. This dispute over whether to recognise the status of the 1982 Convention in regards to the Caspian, has resulted in tension between the littoral countries. Iran and Azerbaijan have not been far from a military confrontation over a disputed area of the Caspian. The dispute over the legal status of the Caspian, has affected foreign investors’ enthusiasm over becoming involved in the region. The median line solution has been encouraged by the USA; this gives Azerbaijan 20.7%, Iran 14.6%, Kazakhstan 29.9%, Russia 15.6% and Turkmenistan 19.2%.⁴⁸⁵ Iran has voiced its desire to divide the Caspian into five equal sections. The other four countries have not approved this as they have far more to gain from the median line approach. Russia has not been consistent in its view regarding the division of the Sea. It has in the past few years agreed to the median line approach for the reasons given above.

⁴⁸² Mehrdad Haghayeghi, ‘The Coming of Conflict to the Caspian Sea’ (hereafter ‘The Coming of Conflict’), Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 50, no. 3, May/June 2003, p. 33

⁴⁸³ Valery Asriyan, ‘Caspian: A Sea of Cooperation or an Apple of Discord?’, Centre for Defence Information, d.o 23.7.03, d.d 22.7.06, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/266-11.cfm>

⁴⁸⁴ Hooman Peimani, The Caspian Pipeline Dilemma: Political Games and Economic Losses (hereafter The Caspian Pipeline Dilemma), Westport, Connecticut, London, 2001, p. 40

⁴⁸⁵ Brice M. Clagett, ‘Ownership of Seabed and Subsoil Resources in the Caspian Sea Under the Rules of International Law’, Caspian Crossroads Magazine, vol.1, Issue no. 3, Fall 1995, <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/usazerb/131.htm>

At a conference aimed at reaching a consensus on the division of the Sea held in Moscow in 2002, Russian experts backed the median line approach and argued that it would be best to share the waters of the Sea in order to allow free navigation and avoid armed clashes between neighbours. This was seen in July 2002 when Iranian gunboats forced a BP exploration ship out of Iranian-Azeri disputed waters. Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have agreed with Russia, while Iran has firmly rejected this suggestion and Turkmenistan has very typically not fully supported either side. Turkmenistan's hesitancy has helped Iran avoid isolation regarding this dispute.⁴⁸⁶ Niyazov has lately appeared to be moving towards a semi agreement with Azerbaijan in regards to their part of the Caspian. This has been the result of heated debates concerning the ownership of disputed offshore fields. So far both sides have agreed on the median line solution but remain confrontational about where to draw the median line.⁴⁸⁷

In 1998, Russia and Kazakhstan decided to agree on the division of the northern section of the Caspian regardless of the dispute concerning the status of the entire sea. Both countries stipulated the median line principle for the northern part of the sea but decided to jointly own the waters. This agreement was followed up with the 2002 agreement, which further endorsed the median line approach for the northern section of the sea. The agreement between Moscow and Astana has solved the issue of three disputed offshore oilfields, all of which will now be split on a 50:50 basis.⁴⁸⁸ This has ultimately given Russia much influence over Kazakh energy resources. The USA is in support of this agreement because it further undermines Iran's influence on the Caspian region.

5.1.2 Competing Influences over Kazakhstan's Energy Resources

Kazakhstan has had to face the obstacle of independence with far greater advantages than most of its neighbours, the main advantage being its enormous economic

⁴⁸⁶ Sergei Blagov, 'Troubled Waters in the Caspian Sea', Center for Defence Information, d.o 28.2.02, d.d 10.4.05, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/195-7.cfm>

⁴⁸⁷ Mustafa Aydin, 'Oil, Pipelines and Security: The Geo-Politics of the Caspian Region' (hereafter 'Oil, Pipelines and Security'), in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-Emerging Region, London, New York, 2004, p.12

⁴⁸⁸ Charles Coe, 'Russia-Kazakh deal to Divide North Caspian Gains US Approval', Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections: News and Trends; Central Asia, vol.7, no.12, d.o 13.6.02, d.d 12.4.05, <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/ntc22446.htm>

potential.⁴⁸⁹ Kazakhstan has huge energy reserves estimated at 8.7 trillion US dollars. Some of its largest offshore oil fields are at Tengiz, and are the tenth largest oil fields in the world, with 6-9 billion barrels of reserves. Kashagan and Karachaganak are the other two oilfields; all three fields have attracted foreign investors. The discovery of the Kashagan oil field, which is estimated to start production in 2005, promises huge profits for Kazakhstan; it has also meant further destabilisation of the geo-political balance in the Caspian region. According to the Kazakh North Caspian Operating Company (AgipKCO), which is developing the Kashagan oilfields, they have discovered oil reserves amounting to 9-13 billion barrels. AgipKCO estimates the field to contain 1 billion tons of oil and is thought to be the largest field discovered in the last 30 years. The discovery of this oilfield has re-triggered the power scramble for raw materials and pipelines amongst the region's main players. It is estimated that by 2020, Kazakhstan could be one of the world's leading oil exporters; the country has the potential to sell ten million barrels of crude per day to the world, as much as Saudi Arabia sells today.⁴⁹⁰ Kazakhstan's energy wealth has the ability to rival that of the Persian Gulf, and cause losses to the international oil cartel, OPEC. This is the case, as Kazakhstan, a non-member state of OPEC, is not obliged to abide to OPEC rules, such as production limits and price agreements. The problem that Kazakhstan has, which places the countries of the Persian Gulf in a far more advantageous position, is that it has very few export routes to the international markets.⁴⁹¹ This is where the new great game clearly unfolds.

The Kashagan consortium was founded in 1997. The Kazakh government initially had shares in this consortium, but it decided to sell its stake to Inpex (Japan) and Philips Petroleum, which is today known as ConocoPhilips. In 2003, BG Group decided to sell its share; this was also the time that the Kazakh government was keen to re-enter in the share ownership of the Kashagan consortium. The government wanted to buy the BG Group share, but the consortium's partners were not too keen on this proposal. The government eventually achieved what it wanted, but not before it had placed pressure

⁴⁸⁹ Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, Stanford, 1995, p. 271

⁴⁹⁰ Kleveman, *Blood and Oil*, p. 75

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.* p. 76

on the consortium partners.⁴⁹² The government was able to successfully get what it wanted as a result of the 2003 changes to the legislation. These changes have been covered in more detail below.

In 1995 Kazakhstan adopted its first Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Law; it assured foreign investors that their rights were protected especially against expropriation, and that the law treated them on the same basis as domestic investors. In general, the Kazakh government was trying to improve the investment environment in order to encourage western companies to invest. Foreign investors throughout the region have often felt that their investments are not protected enough from corruption, criminality, and inefficiency.⁴⁹³ The degree of hesitancy on behalf of foreign companies to invest varies from country to country. Kazakhstan is perhaps one of the safest countries for investment, in spite of the changes made to the FDI law in 2003. According to Umurzakov, “the wording of the previous investment law (1995) was more favourable and provided more confidence to foreign investors. Before, if investors chose international arbitration, in that case supposedly the consent of the state would be received automatically. The new law is subject to interpretation as the conditions under which agreement is needed, for the choice of international courts in case of dispute settlement, are rather vague”.⁴⁹⁴ Therefore, the environment for foreign investors is by far more difficult than it was from 1995 till 2003. The new legislation has increased the state’s right to interfere in foreign projects. It has also allowed the state priority over any other purchaser when a section of a joint project is up for sale. This consequently allows the government greater control of any foreign investment. This pre-emptive right by the state was in theory introduced by the legislature, and not the executive. However, it is well known that the executive has constantly pursued a greater government role in the country’s energy sector and that the legislature is completely subdued and under the control of the executive (as was seen in the first chapter dealing with the internal politics of Central Asia).⁴⁹⁵ These new government-favouring laws have had a much more deterring effect on western investors than on

⁴⁹² Economist Intelligence Unit, ‘Kazakhstan: Country Report’, January 2005, p. 26

⁴⁹³ Michael Kaser, *The Economies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan*, London, 1997, p.50

⁴⁹⁴ Kubat Umurzakov, ‘Regional Round Table on Foreign Direct Investment for Central Asia’, *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*, Dushanbe, 3-4 April 2003, p.38
http://www.unescap.org/tid/mtg/rrtpaper_kazakh.pfd

⁴⁹⁵ Economist Intelligence Unit, ‘Kazakhstan: Country Report’, January 2005, pp. 25-26

Russian ones, as the Russians remain much more familiar and knowledgeable about conducting business in the former Soviet Republics than westerners.

In regards to the littoral countries (excluding Russia and Iran), the USA has shown the most amount of interest in Azerbaijan. There are many reasons for this, such as the early oil discoveries, the feasibility of export routes and production sharing agreements. It is important to point out that Azerbaijan is also the least pro-Russian country on the Caspian, and therefore seen as more susceptible to American influences. Kazakhstan, as seen in previous chapters, still lies very much in Russia's camp, and Turkmenistan is very difficult to do business with. In order for the USA to properly infiltrate the region, it first has to establish a strong presence with the help of one of the regional countries. Azerbaijan is the Uzbekistan of the Caspian in regards to being the main corridor in which American influences infiltrate the region. Washington's relationship with Baku will ultimately help it in getting closer to Kazakh natural resources and ultimately to Kazakh internal affairs. It is important to remember that Azerbaijan (and Uzbekistan until early 2005) is a member of the American oriented GUUAM. The Russians have been wary of Washington's involvement in Azerbaijan, and have often voiced their opinion that the Caspian countries are fully capable of protecting themselves, and their resources from terrorism and smuggling, and do not need or want the involvement of any other country from outside the region. Moscow was especially concerned when the USA was conducting a plan to secure Azerbaijan's maritime border; it has also issued a few verbal warnings regarding its concern over the prospect of US bases being set up in Azerbaijan.⁴⁹⁶ Ultimately, the USA would be able to strike better deals with Kazakhstan if it were already involved in investments with Azerbaijan. Kazakhstan's involvement in the BTC pipeline has shown this tactic to be accurate (this will be explained in more detail below). According to Nichol, the USA is the main instigator for "building oil and gas pipelines from Baku, Azerbaijan, through Tbilisi, Georgia, to Turkey, coaxing Kazakhstan to use the oil pipeline".⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ Rada Guseinova, 'Is Conflict with US Brewing in Russia's Backyard?', The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, Ohio, vol. 55, no. 40, January 7, 2004, p.13

⁴⁹⁷ Jim Nichol, 'Central Asia: Regional Development and Implications for US Interests', p. 425

Even though the USA, and other western countries have increased their initiative to explore, and extract the hidden wealth of the Caspian, there still looms the problem of efficient transport systems to the world markets. This is one of the reasons that westbound pipelines are becoming absolutely necessary if Russia's monopoly over the energy resources of the region is to be challenged. Up until today, most of the regions wealth goes to the Black and Baltic Seas, and to Eastern Europe via Russian pipelines. In 2001-2002, total export amounted to 46 and 36 million tons, respectively; most of this oil ran through Russia before reaching its final destination.⁴⁹⁸ The most prominent westbound pipeline, which avoids Russian territory, and is seen as the most powerful political tool in the hand of Washington, is the BTC pipeline. It is important to remember that although the BTC is seen by Russia through suspicious eyes, Russia does not overtly condemn this project. Russia and the USA are not involved in direct competition; each country publicly supports the actions of the other, even if they are disadvantageous to its own interests. In regards to the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which will be covered in more detail below, Bush welcomed its opening, and talked about furthering cooperation between Russia, the USA, and Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the administration was still adamant about breaking the Russian monopoly of existing pipelines, and pursued the construction of the BTC pipeline, which does not include Russian participation.⁴⁹⁹

Almost ten years after the BTC was first announced as a major project, it was finally opened 25 May 2005. This event marked a new stage in the competition between the west and Russia over the natural resources of the region. Up until the completion of the BTC, Russia, with its northbound pipelines, appeared to be leading the pipeline race. The success of the BTC could dramatically alter the geo-political balance of the region, giving the west a far greater influence over the energy resources of the Caspian. The opening of the pipeline has been described as the biggest investment in the region since the collapse of communism, marking the emergence of the Caspian region as a new force in the world's oil markets.⁵⁰⁰ This project, described as the main geo-political project of the USA in the former Soviet states, was supported by

⁴⁹⁸ Zurab Tevzadze, 'Caspian Oil: Its Export Routes and Transportation Problems' (hereafter Caspian Oil'), *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, no. 1(25), 2004, p.91

⁴⁹⁹ Nichol, 'Central Asia: Regional Development and Implications for US Interests', p.426

⁵⁰⁰ Vincent Boland, 'BTC Pipeline the New Silk Road', *Financial Times*, 26.5.05, p.8

Washington with the aim of creating a route that would bypass Russia.⁵⁰¹ It is estimated that this pipeline will transport 1 million barrels of oil a day from the Caspian to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. From the start of this project, the pipeline faced numerous obstacles. It is feared that the pipeline, which stretched across increasingly unstable countries, may face terrorist attacks from Al-Qaida and other regional extremist groups, such as the IMU. It is also feared that the BTC pipeline will fall victim to political sabotage from Armenian nationalists aiming to hurting the Azeri economy. Iran and Russia are not in favour of this project; Russia sees this route as a method in which the USA can control the Caspian region, and cut links between Moscow and its former satellites. It was notably absent from the opening ceremony. Russia, since the collapse of the USSR, has been an active exporter of natural resources to the European markets; the BTC could affect the amount of energy resources that Russia could export in the future. Since the BTC project has been underway, Russia has also sought to diversify its own export potentials.⁵⁰² According to Aydin, “if the BTC pipeline is built and put into operation, its main effect will be the weakening or even the complete loss of economic and transportation dependence of the Central Asian and Caucasian states on Russia”.⁵⁰³

An international consortium of eleven oil companies is developing the BTC pipeline. Three of the eleven companies are American: Unocal, Amerada Hess and ConocoPhillips. BP is the only British company involved, and is the largest stakeholder. It is important to point out that there are no Russian oil companies in this project.⁵⁰⁴ In spite of non-American oil companies’ participation, and BP being the largest stakeholder, the BTC pipeline remains a politically motivated American project and is strongly backed by Washington.

⁵⁰¹ RAI-Novosti, ‘Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil or Politics’, d.o 6.6.05, d.d 10.6.05, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20050606/40477558.html>

⁵⁰² Gal Luft, ‘Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Not Yet Finished and Already Threatened’, *Institute for the Analysis of Global Security: Energy Security*, d.o 4.11.04, d.d 12.4.05, <http://www.iags.org/n1104041.htm>

⁵⁰³ Aydin, ‘Oil, Pipelines and Security’, p.20

⁵⁰⁴ *Caspian Development and Export*, ‘Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) Pipeline’, d.o November 2004, last updated 31.3.05, d.d 12.4.05, <http://www.caspiandevlopmentandexport.com/ASP/BTC.asp>

The BTC pipeline is of interest and relevance to this thesis not only because it is an example of the growing American influence in the region, but also because its success very much depends on the participation of Kazakhstan. This pipeline is generally seen as unprofitable, unless Kazakh oil is also pumped through it. There appears to be insufficient amounts of oil in Azerbaijan to load the pipeline to full capacity.⁵⁰⁵ Up to ten million tons of Kazakh oil could be shipped by tankers to an Azeri terminal and pumped through the BTC pipeline.⁵⁰⁶ The opening ceremony of the BTC not only brought together the leaders of the three countries involved, US Energy secretary Samuel Bodman, BP's chief executive Lord Browne but also Nazarbayev. Although Nazarbayev attended this ceremony, he did not immediately commit to Kazakh participation. One of the reasons for this could have been his reluctance to antagonise Moscow.⁵⁰⁷ In June 2006, Nazarbayev finally committed to shipping oil via the BTC pipeline.⁵⁰⁸ Astana has also made it clear that it is free to also use other export routes⁵⁰⁹ and in early 2006 increased the amount of oil pumped through the CPC (this will be covered in more detail below). There is also a plan to construct an underwater pipeline under the Caspian in order to help the transportation of Kazakh oil to the BTC pipeline. The extension would be expensive, and difficult to implement, but Russia has undergone a similar project with Turkey- the 'Blue Stream' pipeline.⁵¹⁰

Russia's influence over the region very much depends on its ability to remain the most important and prominent energy giant. This is a sphere where the westbound (under strong American influence) and southeast bound (involving Muslim countries) pipelines, in addition to the threat from extremist groups, can cause a lot of harm to Russian interests. There are obstacles facing the transportation of oil due to the volatile nature of the region. It is very much feared that Islamic extremist groups or Armenians

⁵⁰⁵ Tevzade, 'Caspian Oil', p. 96

⁵⁰⁶ Dina Sarsenova, 'Kazakh Oil to go Through Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipe', The Times of Central Asia (Bishkek), 18.3.04, p. 8

⁵⁰⁷ Ibragim Alibekov (ed.), 'While Russia Watches, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan Explore New Ties', Eurasianet.org, d.o 3.3.04, d.d 12.4.05, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav030304.shtml>

⁵⁰⁸ Shahin Abbasov and Khadija Ismailova, 'BTC: Kazakhstan Finally Commits to the Pipeline', Eurasianet.org, d.o 19.6.06, d.d 22.7.06, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav061906.shtml>

⁵⁰⁹ Eurasianet.org, 'Caspian Basin Leaders Hail Opening of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline', d.o 25.5.05, d.d 9.6.05, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav052505.shtml>

⁵¹⁰ Mark A Smith, 'Russia's Energy Diplomacy', Conflict Studies Research Centre, March 2002, p.2

may take advantage of the weak security regarding these pipelines and sabotage them, or that the ongoing war in Chechnya is affecting Russia businesses. This was the case in 1999, when the Russian Fuel and Energy Ministry declared that the Baku-Novorossiisk pipeline would be shut down indefinitely. This was a result of the ongoing war in Chechnya, and the explosions that damaged a large section of the pipeline.⁵¹¹ The damage done was blamed on Chechen extremists, whose actions had proven that they were able to disrupt the Russian oil market and help push regional oil producing countries (in this case Azerbaijan) further into the hands of western investors. This kind of Islamic influence worked to the advantage of US sponsored projects, but after September 11 Islamic extremism has targeted both Russian and American influences.

The CPC is one of Russia's strongest political tools of influence over Kazakh natural resources. The CPC was completed in 2001, and travels from the Tengiz oilfields in Kazakhstan to the Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. The Tengiz oilfields have estimated recoverable reserves of 6-9 billion barrels. The CPC was originally created as a joint venture between the government of Kazakhstan and the government of Oman, which was acting through the Oman oil company. It is important to mention that today Russia is also considered a founding country of this pipeline. At the start of the project there were major delays related to the construction of the pipeline. The two most prominent obstacles were that the original route for this pipeline ran through Grozny. The first Chechen war resulted in the pipeline being diverted via Daghestan. The second obstacle to the construction of this pipeline was that the conditions offered to Chevron were considered to be unsatisfactory. In 1996, Chevron was forced out of the project, and due to the lack of cooperative understanding the Kazakh government decided to terminate the entire agreement. A revised share structure was drafted in 1997, and Chevron was once again incorporated into the project in 1998.⁵¹² The US government is a supporter of this pipeline, especially as TengizChevroil (TCO) develops the Tengiz oilfields. It has, however, made its clear that it will continue advocating the construction of pipelines that break Russia's monopoly of existing routes. In April

⁵¹¹ Asia Times Online, 'Central Asia/Siberia: Russia Turns the Screw on Azerbaijan', d.o 18.6.99, d.d 15.4.05, <http://www.atimes.com/c-asia/AF22Ag01.html>

⁵¹² Akiner, 'Politics of Energy', pp.14-15

2006, Nazarbayev agreed with Putin to greatly expand Kazakhstan's oil exports to Russia via the CPC from 28 million metric tons a year to 67 million tons.⁵¹³ Unsurprisingly, this pipeline is a major economic asset to its partners, and to the countries it flows through; it also carries huge political importance. Russia's LUKoil is the largest shareholder and owns 24%, Kazakhstan owns 19%, Oman 7%, and the USA 15%. International producing companies share the remaining percentages. Undoubtedly, Russia is the main benefactor, especially as the pipeline runs through its territory.⁵¹⁴

LUKoil has played a dominant role in regards to investments in the Kazakh section of the Caspian. In 2004, Putin showed great enthusiasm in guaranteeing that LUKoil played a prominent role in the Kazakh section of the Caspian. In 2003, LUKoil and Kazmunaygaz⁵¹⁵ signed an agreement on the extraction of hydrocarbons in the Kazakh and Russian sectors of the Sea.⁵¹⁶ In early 2004 LUKoil stepped up its emphasis on Kazakhstan by signing an agreement with Kazmunaygaz, which further intensified cooperative development of the Kazakh section of the Tyub-Karagan and Atash oilfields. In accordance with the agreement signed, LUKoil will acquire a 50% share in the Tyub-Karagan oilfield, which is in the Kazakh section of the Sea. The two sides also agreed on cooperative prospecting in the Atash offshore field. Oil reserves are estimated to be 150 million tons at Tyub-Karagan and 130 million tons at Atash. The product sharing agreement in regards to the Tyub-Karagan oilfield has been signed for 40 years.⁵¹⁷ Undisputedly, Russia has a vital influence over the Kazakh sector of the Caspian Sea. Putin's first visit abroad in 2005 was to Kazakhstan; there he emphasised the importance of cooperation between Russia and its energy-rich Central Asian neighbour. Putin has urged for high level talks between the Caspian littoral countries, and hailed the progress Russia and Kazakhstan made in jointly developing oilfields.

⁵¹³ Sergei Blagov, 'Russia Registers Significant Victory in Caspian Energy Basin Contest', *Eurasianet.org*, d.o 5.4.06, d.d 22.7.06,

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav040506.shtml>

⁵¹⁴ *Caspian Pipeline Consortium*, 'CPC Structure', d.o 2004, d.d 12.4.05,

<http://www.cpc.ru/portal/alias!press/lang!en-US/tabID!3360/DesktopDefault.asp>

⁵¹⁵ Kazmunaygaz was the result of a merger in 2002 between the state-owned oil and gas producer-Kazakhoil, and the state-owned pipeline operator-TransNefteGaz.

⁵¹⁶ Guseynov, 'Russian Energy Companies', p.61

⁵¹⁷ Rasul Ibragimov, 'Energy Alliance: Russia, Kazakhstan to Develop Caspian Oilfield Together, *The Times of Central Asia* (Bishkek), vol.6, no.3 (254), 22.1.04

Nazarbayev, on his part, confirmed that Russia remained his country's priority partner.⁵¹⁸ The Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline, which transported oil from Kazakhstan to China for the first time in July 2006, has added to the increasing struggle for Kazakh energy resources.⁵¹⁹

5.1.3 Competing Influences over Turkmen Energy Resources

Competing influences over Turkmen energy resources are equally active as they are in Kazakhstan. Niyazov is not only interested in doing business with the USA and Russia, but also with Iran. In spite of the USA's reluctance that this Central Asian country has a firm economic partnership with the Islamic Republic, Niyazov appears to have no restrictions in dealing with whomever will supply profit to his country. This was particularly seen in his cooperation with the Taliban. Niyazov's links with the Taliban coincided with a time when his Central Asian neighbours were very concerned with the rise of Islamic extremism. As will be seen in the chapter concerned with Islamic influences over Central Asia, many of the Central Asian Islamic extremist groups collaborated with the Taliban, and frequently used Afghanistan as a training camp and safe-haven. Niyazov likes his country to be referred to as the second Kuwait. It has proven gas reserves of one hundred trillion cubic feet, and many untapped reserves waiting to be exploited. This country's untouched reserves make it a treasure of the 21st century, but the nature of the regime and the ambiguous foreign investment laws are a constant deterrent to all foreign investors. This country's only chance of really becoming a second Kuwait is by opening itself to foreign markets. It needs to attract investors, whose money will be able to transform the country entirely, and end the deteriorating socio-economic environment. Unfortunately, the Niyazov regime is having difficulty in attracting foreign investors; instead the regime in Ashgabad continuously breaks the laws that protect foreign ventures by overriding them with presidential decrees.⁵²⁰ This has resulted in tremendous harm to the foreign investment milieu.

⁵¹⁸ RIA-Nivosti, 'Russian President Visits Kazakhstan: Putin's First Trip Abroad this Year', The Times of Central Asia, vol.7, no.2 (305), January 12 2005

⁵¹⁹ China Daily.Com, 'Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline Opens to Commercial Operation', d.o 12.7.06, d.d 22.7.06, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-07/12/content_639147.htm

⁵²⁰ Steven Sabol, 'Turkmenbashi: Going it Alone' (hereafter 'Turkmenbashi'), Problems of Post-Communism, vol.50, no.5, September/October 2003, p. 51

The Trans-Afghan pipeline (TAP), which is also sometimes referred to as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipeline, has brought Turkmenistan to the center of the political struggle fought between giant energy companies. It is important at this stage to point out that some of these giant energy firms not only have economic power but also political power. Some of them have a strong say in the foreign policy orientations of their country. They are the 'behind the scenes navigators' of foreign affairs. This was most clearly seen with the appointment of Dick Cheney-former CEO of Halliburton, as Vice President under the Bush administration. Although this argument is not entirely relevant to competing influences over the natural resources of the Caspian countries, it does show the importance the US administration places on countries and regions rich in energy resources. Operation Enduring Freedom brought the USA's influence closer to Central Asia and the Caspian region. By 1998, Cheney (then head of Halliburton) had realised the strategic importance of the Caspian region, and voiced his determination to transfer oil and gas through a pipeline that would not enhance Russian, Iranian or Chinese political and economic power. He was very much in favour of a pipeline through Afghanistan, which would allow the diversification of the region's energy, and most important it would allow the USA to penetrate one of the world wealthiest regions.⁵²¹ The Taliban later proved to be a major obstacle to this dream.

In regards to this chapter, the story of the struggle over the TAP between Bidas, an Argentinian oil company, and Unocal is only relevant in so far as it involved Turkmenistan. Niyazov showed willingness, not only to orientate his country towards the USA, but also towards the Taliban in order to achieve a pipeline that could diversify gas flows to countries other than those of the CIS. Undoubtedly, the Turkmenbashi would like to loosen Russia's grip on his country's natural resources simply because he would then be able to sell Turkmenistan's products at a much higher price than he is to Ukraine and Russia-his main gas partners.

⁵²¹ George Monbiot, 'America's Pipe Dream', *Guardian Unlimited*, d.o 23.10.01, d.d, 18.4.05, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Columnists/Column/0,5673,579174,00.html>

Bridas was the first western company to show interest in Turkmenistan's abundant wealth. Just after the collapse of the USSR western foreign companies showed no interest in investing in an isolated country, headed by a dictator, and with no binding investment laws. In the latter half of the 1990's the authorities in the country began to make promises to treat foreign investors better, and generally have a better attitude towards foreign investments. In reality nothing materialised from these promises, as Turkmenistan seemed lost in its Soviet past.⁵²² By 1992, Bridas had achieved approval from the Turkmenbashi to explore Turkmen gas fields. It was agreed that Bridas' production profit would be divided 50-50 between itself and the Turkmenistan government. Bridas had also signed an agreement with the Afghan government for the construction and operation of a gas pipeline.⁵²³ The situation soon turned very murky for Bridas; Niyazov accused them of exploiting his country and demanded to re-negotiate all previous contracts. With no binding foreign investment law, Bridas was powerless. By the mid 1990's Niyazov had swung to the side of Unocal. The Argentinian oil company had realised that it had been caught in the middle of a great game, fought between regional and global powers.⁵²⁴

In 1995, a collection of US oil companies, including Unocal formed a private Foreign Oil Companies Group in Washington; this was designed to further US interests in the Caspian region. This group hired former politicians in order for them to promote the group's case in Washington, for example the advisor of Unocal was Henry Kissinger. This 'Foreign Oil Companies Group' had the full backing of the US State Department, the National Security Council, the CIA and the Department of Energy and Commerce.⁵²⁵ US oil companies were starting to have an influence over American foreign policy, consequently the administration was starting to show more interest in certain Central Asian countries where Russian influences were not so strong. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were seen too much under the Russian wing. Tajikistan was in the middle of a civil war, which was of no interest to the USA; that left Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as the most favourable options. The TAP was an ideal

⁵²² The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Turkmenistan: Country Report', 2nd quarter 1998, p. 16

⁵²³ WorldPress.Org, 'Timeline of Competition Between Unocal and Bridas for the Afghanistan Pipeline', d.d 12.04.05, http://www.worldpress.org/specials/pp/pipeline_timeline.htm

⁵²⁴ Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 166-169

⁵²⁵ Larry Chin, 'Unocal and the Afghan Pipeline', *Centre for Research on Globalisation: Online Journal*, d.o March 2002, d.d 23.4.05, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CH1203A.html>

project for the USA; it not only avoided Iran, but also signaled support to Turkmenistan while at the same time snubbing Russia.⁵²⁶

In 1996, Unocal achieved the support it needed from the three countries involved in the TAP. Initially, Pakistan under Bhutto refused to allow Unocal to replace Bidas, but the fall of Bhutto's government later that year spelled out success for Unocal as they won over the new Pakistani government, and secured their leading position in the TAP.⁵²⁷ It appears that the dispute between Bidas and Unocal was not strictly about oil companies wanting to make business deals, but also about the American government wanting to place itself in a strategic position of influence by using its oil companies. In other words a war of influences over energy was evolving, of which Bidas was simply a victim. The American administration was ready to go to all lengths in order to anchor itself in the region. According to Rashid, within hours of Kabul falling to the Taliban in 1996, Clinton announced that America would form diplomatic ties with the new regime. Washington claimed it had no objection to the Taliban's fanatical adherence and interpretation of the Sharia and that it believed the Taliban were not anti-western, just anti-modern and did not see any obstacle in conducting bilateral relation, especially if that meant securing the construction of the TAP.⁵²⁸ By allowing Unocal to win the bid over the TAP, the Taliban were legitimising their power base. Niyazov was equally keen to get American oil companies to bid for the development of the country's oil and gas fields. In the late 1990's, Turkmenistan's cooperation with American oil companies intensified; an estimated 240.2 million dollars were spent on project in Turkmenistan. However, dispute over the legal status of the Caspian has hindered Turkmen business. In 1998, the US oil giant Mobil terminated a business deal with Turkmenistan as a result of disputed energy fields between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Rashid, *Taliban*, pp. 161-162

⁵²⁷ Nurev Independent Research, *Timeline of Competition between Unocal and Bidas for Afghan Pipeline: World Press Review*, d.o December 2001, d.d 23.4.05, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/51/119.html>

⁵²⁸ Rashid, *Taliban*, p.166

⁵²⁹ *Caspian Business Report*, vol.2, no. 8, d.o April 30 1998, d.d 24.4.05, <http://ourworld.copuserve.com/homepages/usazerb/980430c.htm>

The Unocal-Bridas pipeline struggle and the wooing of the Taliban came to a complete halt after September 11. In the eyes of the US administration, the Taliban could no longer be tolerated, and the once perceived unusual yet innocent adherence to the strictest Islamic principles could no longer be justified. The Taliban, although previously targeted by US missiles in 1998, were now more than ever seen as a regime responsible for harbouring, protecting and sympathising with the world's most ferocious anti-American organisation. Operation Enduring Freedom followed; it was aimed at terminating the Taliban regime and consequently Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaida. As a result of the war, the TAP remains only a proposed pipeline, while instability in Afghanistan has been and will remain a major barrier to the development of this pipeline. All former negotiations (with the Taliban) have been terminated; the region is regarded as even more unstable than it has ever been before, and Niyazov has not changed his harsh attitude towards foreign investors. Finance for this 1,680 km pipeline, which is estimated to transport 33 bn cu meters of gas an year, is estimated at 3.3 bn US dollars.⁵³⁰

Niyazov's belief that he is entitled to make any changes he finds suitable to any already agreed upon principle or agreement, has not frightened Russia from courting Ashgabad. This is not to say that Putin and Niyazov have not had major differences in the past few years. This was especially the case when Niyazov unexpectedly decided to abrogate the Turkmen-Russian dual citizenship treaty of 1993. This has already been covered in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia. To a large extent, Turkmen-Russian needs for one another in the energy sphere are reciprocal. Niyazov cannot really afford to distance himself from Russia because he cannot easily find a replacement, and because Russia controls Turkmenistan's main export routes.⁵³¹ At the same time Russia will not easily allow Turkmenistan to diversify its exports, especially as Niyazov is already asking for more money on his gas exports to Russia (and Ukraine).

After failing to find outside investors, Niyazov turned to Putin for a landmark gas deal in 2003. He signed a 25 year deal with his Russian counterpart to sell Gazprom 6

⁵³⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Turkmenistan: Country Report', April 2005, p.21

⁵³¹ Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Turkmenistan: Country Report', October 2003, pp. 6-7

billion cubic meters of gas, with volumes set to rise to 10 bcm from 2006 and up to 80 bcm by 2009.⁵³² This gives Russia a great amount of influence over Turkmenistan, as it appears to be the main external player in the energy resource export of Turkmenistan. Under this agreement, Russia will pay less than world market prices for the gas, giving it the opportunity to export its own gas to Europe at world market prices. The 2003 agreement was a continuation from a previous agreement between Niyazov and Gazprom President Rem Vyakhirev resulting in an arrangement on a price of 36 US dollars per 1,000 cubic meters, 40% of which was paid in cash and the rest in consumer goods. Both agreements seem more favourable to Russia than Turkmenistan. Ashghabad is seen to have little choice over the matter, as it has few other means of exporting one of its most profit seeking commodities. Ukraine is Turkmenistan's other partner in gas exports.⁵³³ Disagreement, in early 2005, over gas prices between Russia, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan, resulted in the latter blocking natural gas supplies to its main exporting partners. After turning the gas taps off in early 2005, Ukraine agreed to raise the purchasing price for Turkmen gas from 44 US dollars to 58 US dollars per one thousand cubic meters; Gazprom refused to follow. Turkmenistan wanted Gazprom to match the Ukrainian quota, while Gazprom argued that legally the old price agreements were still in force.⁵³⁴ In mid April 2005, Alexei Miller, Gazprom's chief executive officer conducted talks with Niyazov in order to lift the embargo imposed by Turkmenistan. Both men agreed on strictly abiding to the existing agreement in regards to gas prices. Russia appears to have ultimately won the battle over gas prices.⁵³⁵ Turkmenistan cannot afford to antagonise Russia; this example is an indication of Russia's influence over Ashghabad.

Although Russia (and Ukraine) is Turkmenistan's main exporter of gas, it is not the only means that Turkmenistan has to export its natural resources. Iran is another partner. Russia's main threat to its influence in regards to pipeline projects and export

⁵³² The Moscow Times.com, 'Gazprom Inks 25-Year Turkmen Deal', d.o 11.4.03, d.d 2.4.05, <http://themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/04/11/042.html>

⁵³³ BBC News, 'Turkmenistan Agrees Russian Gas Deal', d.o 18.12.99, d.d 20.4.05, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/570486.stm>

⁵³⁴ Sergei Blagov, 'Russia Outmanoeuvres Ukraine For Turkmen Gas-For Now', Eurasianet.org, d.o 21.4.05, d.d 25.4.05, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav042105.shtml>

⁵³⁵ Gazprom, 'Gazprom's Delegation Travels to Turkmenistan', d.o 15.4.05, d.d 25.4.05, <http://www.gazprom.com/eng/news/2005/04/16206.shtml>

routes is from western oil companies, mainly American. However, Muslim countries such as Iran are also a minor threat to Russia's energy monopoly. It is essential to point out that the real Islamic threat does not come from Muslim countries but from Islamic extremists willing to sabotage Russian and western pipelines, consequently affecting the business environment in the region. Muslim countries, such as Turkey, participate in both Russian- and western backed-projects, as would Iran if given the opportunity. It appears that the aim of these Muslim countries is not to monopolise the energy routes and exert their dominance in the region, but simply to benefit from the wealth of the region and participate in foreign investments. In addition Iranian projects have a relatively low capacity, as will be seen below, and do not appear able to rival those of Russia and the west. As previously mentioned, the Islamic influence over energy resources, mainly affects the Russian and American influences when it comes in the form of extremism.

This is not to say that Iranian-backed projects should be underestimated; they are a contributing factor to the region's close alliance and relationship with the Muslim world. From all five Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan has the best business relationship with Iran. The Korpedzhe-Kurt-Koy (KKK) pipeline is one of the few pipelines that directly carries gas outside the former Soviet Union. It was built in 1998, and connects Turkmenistan's Korpedzhe gas field to the Iranian town of Kurt Koy. In 1998, 4 billion cubic meters of natural gas were delivered to Iran via this pipeline. Gas exports are expected to increase each year; this has not been the case so far.⁵³⁶ The Kazakh-Turkmen-Iranian (KTI) oil pipeline is still a project on paper. This pipeline is estimated to be 1,710 km in length, costing 2 billion dollars, and with the capacity to deliver 25 million tons a year.⁵³⁷ Analysts and often the country leaders acknowledge that the most cost effective export routes from Central Asia to Europe are those that run through Iran. There are certain obstacles with projects that include Iranian participation. The most prominent of them are the US sanctions placed on Iran; these very much discourage foreign investors.⁵³⁸ Central Asian leaders are also hesitant to

⁵³⁶ M. Wesley Shoemaker, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, New York, 2004, p. 288

⁵³⁷ Tevzadze, 'Caspian Oil', p.94

⁵³⁸ Caspian Sea Overview, 'Pipeline Routes and Marketing Difficulties', d.o 1999, d.d 12.4.05, <http://www.treemedia.com/cfrlibrary/homepage/overview/q2.html>

pursue cooperation with Iran out of fear of antagonising the USA and deterring it from investing in their own country.

5.1.4 The Importance of Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik Energy Resources

The last three Central Asian countries do not enjoy the same amount of natural wealth as the two discussed above. Uzbekistan has the largest amount of natural resources in comparison to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. However, Uzbekistan's importance does not lie with its natural wealth; this will be explained in more detail below. It is estimated that Uzbekistan has 0.1 of the world's oil reserves; oil exports form an important sector for the Uzbek economy. In recent years, new oil and gas fields have been discovered, but the size of these fields is incomparable to those found in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.⁵³⁹ Gas is one of the country's main export earners, and Russia is one of the most important gas-importing partners for Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan also exports natural resources to its less privileged neighbours, and at times uses this power as a political tool to intimidate them. The real importance of Uzbekistan, especially in the eyes of the USA, lies in its essential geo-strategic location and its ambiguous relationship with Russia. As was explained in the chapter related to American influences in Central Asia, Uzbekistan, since independence, has had the strongest relationship with the USA. Until early 2005, Uzbekistan was a member of GUUAM; while Azerbaijan is the doorway to the Caspian region, Uzbekistan has been America's entrance to Central Asia. America's good relationship and influence over the policies of Uzbekistan brought it to the heart of the region. It is also important to remember that the vast majority of the Central Asian population resides in this country, giving it even more prominence in Central Asian affairs. It is also one of the most Islamic countries, home to extremist organisations such as the IMU, and harbouring other groups such as HT.⁵⁴⁰

As was explained in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia, Uzbekistan's shift in foreign policy in mid 2004 came after the USA intensified its

⁵³⁹ Paul Rivlin, 'Oil and Gas in the Economies of the Caspian Region', in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-emerging Region, p. 44

⁵⁴⁰ Marina Pikulina, 'Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security: A Historical Preface to Current Events' (hereafter 'Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security'), Conflict Studies Research Centre, November 1999, p.3

criticism of the lack of reform in the country, and consequently withheld a large amount of financial aid. Tension further intensified after the American-backed revolution in Ukraine, during which Karimov supported Yanukovich. Finally the events in Andijan resulted in a re-orientation of Uzbek policies away from Washington. This was mainly seen with Karimov's request that Russia join the CACO. In the energy sphere, Russia has also been more prominent than in the past. In November 2004, Uzbekistan and LUKoil agreed on a 35-year production sharing agreement. LUKoil has agreed to invest 1 billion US dollars in the development of a gas field in central Uzbekistan. In late 2004, Gazprom also signed a production sharing agreement with Uzbekneftegaz.⁵⁴¹

Kyrgyzstan, unlike many of its neighbours, lacks any significant energy resources. Kyrgyzstan depends on Russia and other Central Asian countries to supply it with energy. The natural resources that it does have are: hydroelectricity, gold, mercury, uranium and coal. A large portion of the country's revenue comes from the export of gold.⁵⁴² This country and Tajikistan play no role in the politics of the Caspian region, or in the competing influences over energy resources.

Tajikistan, war torn and lacking in energy resources, has not attracted many American investments. This is a country where Russian and Islamic influences have competed, and remain the most prominent. As has previously been explained, it was in this country that the Islamic threat loomed the most, especially between 1992-1997. Religious instability in this country posed a threat to the entire region. Tajikistan is known to have been the poorest country in the Soviet Union; it has none of the characteristics that attract foreign investors. Yet this forgotten 'failed state'-as it is often referred to- remains courted by Russia. Russia's influence over this country has already been discussed in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia. Russian investments in this former Soviet Republic far outnumber any other foreign investments. In October 2004, Russia invested around 2 billion US dollars in Tajikistan's energy and aluminum sector. Russia has also agreed to complete the construction of the Sangtuda hydroelectricity-generating station. Iran has promised to

⁵⁴¹ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Uzbekistan: Country Report, March 2005, p.28

⁵⁴² The Economist Intelligence Unit, Kyrgyzstan: Country Report, February 2005, p. 25

invest in this power plant as well. Iran's participation in Tajik affairs has been essential; they not only helped bring the Tajik civil war to an end, but have also been active in helping the Tajik government regain some of its economic strength.⁵⁴³ Iran has never attempted to have an Islamicising influence on the ethnically Persian Tajiks, nor on any other Muslim country in the CIS.⁵⁴⁴ Russia and Tajikistan also agreed that RusAL-a Russian aluminum company could further invest around 1.6 billion US dollars in Tajikistan's energy and aluminum sectors.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Tajikistan: Country Report, March 2005, p. 20

⁵⁴⁴ Anat Lapidot-Firilla, 'Dancing with Wolves: Turco-Iranian Relations in Perspective', in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-emerging Region, p. 133

⁵⁴⁵ The Economist Intelligence Unit, Tajikistan: Country Report, March 2005, p. 20

5.2 Conclusion

As seen above, Russian and American competition is also active in the sphere of petro-politics. In regards to energy resources the third competing influence (Islamic) is the weakest. The activities of extremist organisations have so far been limited, while regional Muslim countries such as Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran have not used the Islamic card as a tool in this sphere. The struggle over the treasures of the Caspian region (by the other two powers) is not only economically motivated but very much politically motivated as well. Whichever side can exert the largest amount of energy related dominance over this region has an essential geo-strategic lead over the other. One of the main reasons why the USA is so interested in this part of the former Soviet Empire is a result of its tremendous wealth at a time when the USA is looking to diversify its energy partners from the Arabian Gulf. The USA's success (and Russia's) in achieving a dominant energy role in the Caspian further enables it to have a greater influence over the domestic and foreign affairs of the region. Competition over energy resources is but another prize in achieving overall prominence and importance in this fought over region. As seen above, Russia's bilateral deals with Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have given it an additional advantage over the USA. Russian familiarity with the volatile and unstable (concerning foreign investment laws and corruption) business environment of these countries has made doing business with them easier than for western and American companies. The opening of the BTC pipeline, and Kazakhstan's agreed participation in this project have symbolised a blow to Russia's reputation as the main energy giant of the region. The completion of the BTC project characterises a further step in the competition between these two cold war rivals. Russia's monopoly over the energy resources of Kazakhstan very much depend on the success of this new pipeline, and whether or not Russia's bilateral agreements and already existing northbound pipelines are enough to keep Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan faithful allies, especially in the face of future American oriented project. According to Igor Torbakov, "A number of energy analysts and strategic planners have long argued that the BTC project will likely redraw the geopolitical map of the turbulent South Caucasus (and Kazakhstan), reducing the region's economic reliance

on Moscow”.⁵⁴⁶ Moscow’s control over the energy resources of the USSR’s former Republics, in addition to the Central Asian ones, is an experiment that is proving to be more difficult with time, but for the time being Moscow can still relatively comfortably say that it still holds the reins of the vast bulk of Central Asian energy exports.

⁵⁴⁶ Igor Torbakov, ‘Will Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline Carry Revolutionary Ideas Along With Crude?’, Eurasia Daily Monitor, d.o 27.5.05, d.d 10.6.05, http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2369809

6.0 Islamic Influences and Central Asia

This chapter examines the influences of the third power this thesis is concerned with. Islamic influences are not easy to research, as Islam is often not perceived as a power with competing influences that affects different aspects and strata of society. The study of the relationship of Islam with contemporary Central Asia cannot be overlooked when researching what determines the social, political, and economic paths the region appears to be taking. Unfortunately most academic literature does not approach Islam on the same level as other competing powers (which are most often countries). These issues have already been discussed in the introduction. Islam, Russia and America all have internal and external influences on the region; at the same time each power can also have an effect on the influences of the other powers. In this thesis, Islam is mainly seen as deriving its power from the internal environment in each of the Central Asian countries. There are also a few examples when Islam acts as an external influence on the region. As Islam is not a country and is mainly approached as an internal power, it cannot conduct economic agreements or provide for a military base. Hence this chapter is mainly concerned with Islam's cultural and political influences. As with the chapter related to Russian influences in Central Asia, the first section briefly looks at the Islamic legacy in the region.

It is first important to make clear definitions and clarify the differences and links between political, fundamentalist, extremist and secular Islam. Political Islam has previously in this thesis been briefly defined as when Islam plays an integral part in state affairs, when the state is run according to Islamic norms and rules. Denoeux provides a more complex and philosophical definition when he describes it as, "a form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organisations that pursue political objectives. It provides political responses to today's societal challenges by imagining a future, the foundations for which rest on re-appropriated, re-invented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition".⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁷ Guilain Denoeux, 'The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam', *Middle East Policy*, vol. 9, no. 2, June 2002, p. 61

Political Islam includes but is not restricted to Islamic extremism and Islamic fundamentalism. Secular Islam can also be political, but is often not. Islamic extremism is entirely political and is often related to acts of violence and terrorism. The IMU is an example of an Islamic extremist group. Islamic fundamentalism is religious and does not necessarily (but may) have political inclinations. HT is a good example of how Islamic fundamentalism can overlap with Islamic extremism. HT is a non-violent Islamic organisation, which is highly politicised at the same time. Lahoud describes Islamic fundamentalism as when a group of Muslims use religion as a tool to enhance their political ambitions.⁵⁴⁸ It is clear that Lahoud sees Islamic fundamentalism as part of political Islam.

Islamic fundamentalism may also overlap with secular Islam, and be religious and cultural without being political. Islamic extremism, Islamic fundamentalism and secular Islam can also all fall under the umbrella of political Islam to differing degrees, although Islamic fundamentalism and especially secular Islam most often lie outside the zone of political Islam. As previously argued, secular Islam is often non-politicised. It is generally seen (according to this thesis as well), as Islam's cultural influence on society. The general increase in the Islamicisation of Central Asian society has strengthened secular Islam. The fear is that with the Islamicisation of society, there could also develop an Islamicisation of secular Islam. In other words there could develop a stronger religious role over commonly though secular activities and motivations, such as in business, strategies of social enhancement and entertainment.⁵⁴⁹ The IRP today is a good example of an Islamic fundamentalist organisation, which is politicised and also incorporates aspects of secularism.

⁵⁴⁸ Nelly Lahoud, Political Thought in Islam: A Study in Intellectual Boundaries, London, New York, 2005, p.15

⁵⁴⁹ Olivier Roy, Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah, London, 2004, p. 40

6.1 Islam before Independence

6.1.1 The Birth of Islam in Central Asia

It was not until 610 that archangel Gabriel came to Mohamed Ibn Abdullah with a revelation making him Allah's messenger on earth. The angel asked Mohamed to read three times; each time Mohamed replied 'I can not read'. The Angel finally said: "Read in the name of your Lord, who created man from cloth. Read in the name of your God, the most bountiful, who taught by means of the pen, and taught man what he did not know".⁵⁵⁰ This was the Prophet's first revelation; one of many that would eventually form the Koran. It was during the Omayyad era from 661 to 750 that Islam first reached Central Asia. According to Skrine and Ross, "The Arabs spared no effort to spread the tenets of Islam, which alone was capable of welding together communities differing widely in race, language, and customs".⁵⁵¹ By 667, the Omayyad Caliph Mo'awiya, from Damascus, ordered an expedition to spread Islam in the area of Korasan (which is present-day Iran and Tajikistan). This was the start of the Islamicisation of modern day Central Asia. By 673 his Islamic armies had reached present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, they had entered Korasan, charged through Bukhara and conquered most of the surrounding area.

The year 705 was the turning point in the history of Islam in Central Asia; this was due to the appointment of Kutayba Ibn Muslim as governor of Korasan. Until this point the Muslim campaigns were nothing more than raids and invasions into Bukhara and parts of Transoxiana, with the consolidation of limited authority. Kutayba was the first Arab leader to force the people of this area to acknowledge the Caliph's supremacy and abide to Islam.⁵⁵² From that early stage parts of Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) started their Islamic history. Bukhara became one of the main centres of the Islamic world, ranked on the same level as Mecca.⁵⁵³ In 711 Kutayba intensified his campaigns and Samarkand fell under his control; as did the Ferghana valley in 714.

⁵⁵⁰ The Koran, 96:1-5

⁵⁵¹ F.H Skrine and E.D Ross, The Heart of Asia, London, 1899, p. 38

⁵⁵² *ibid.* pp. 38-40

⁵⁵³ William Eleroy Curtis, Turkestan: The Heart of Asia (hereafter Turkestan) London, 1911, p.146

By the ninth century Islam had anchored itself in parts of Central Asia, and acquired a permanent role in culture and tradition. Islam was adopted easily in certain parts of Central Asia due to the life style of those living in the area. The more nomadic the inhabitants were the less they adopted Islam; this was due to their lack of understanding and willingness to adapt the traditional scholarly Islam of settled areas. This was and still is a reason why urbanised Islam is far more powerful than rural Islam.⁵⁵⁴ Therefore, Islam had a greater impact on the sedentary people of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan than on any other region in present day Central Asia. Although Islam reached Kazakhstan at an early date, it did not seem to have an effect on the tribal people till the sixteenth century; and even then it was mild. The region's more nomadic people converted more slowly and in a less serious manner.⁵⁵⁵ This was a result of clan and tribe based loyalties; their allegiance to their clan or tribe was prioritised over Islam, and undermined the cohesive elements that Islam provided.

6.1.2 Islam in Central Asia During the Russian Empire

Almost all the inhabitants of modern-day Central Asia belong to the Hanafi Mathhab (school) of Sunni Islam. A considerable number of them, especially those in the Bukhara area, adhered to Sufism; a form of Islamic mysticism, which preached direct communication with God. During the Russian Empire's control of present day Central Asia, Islam hardly appeared as a strong political force rivalling that of the Empire's authority. It was tame Islam due to the Russian temptations of modernity, especially in the fields of industry, education and technology. Consequently, what evolved was an interpretation of Islam compatible with the everyday life of that period.⁵⁵⁶ This interpretation of Islam became known as Jadidism.

6.1.3 Islam in Central Asia during the Soviet Era

Jadidism was a form of religious modernism, an attempt to reform Islam. This movement originated in the late nineteenth century, but it became particularly prominent and active during the early years of the Soviet period. In the language of the

⁵⁵⁴ Rashid, *Jihad*, pp. 26-30

⁵⁵⁵ Edward W. Walker, 'Islam, Islamism and Political Order in Central Asia' (hereafter 'Islam, Islamism'), *Journal of International Affairs*, vol.56, no.2, Spring 2003, p.23

⁵⁵⁶ Rashid, *Jihad*, p. 30

Gorbachev era, Jadidism was the perestroika and glasnost of religion. Radicalism did not feature in the Jadid's agenda; they were a peaceful movement, asking for religious modernity. They were a modernist religious group, who used education as their main tool for establishing their movement. Its confrontation with Soviet rule resulted in its premature disappearance.

In the early days of the revolution, Lenin knew that he could not afford to lose the support of Russia's Muslims if he wanted his revolution to be successful; at least he did not want them to enter the civil war on the White side. In order to guarantee their support the new Soviet government published 'The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia'. It promised equal sovereignty for all the nations of the former Tsarist Empire, the right to self-determination and the cancellation of limitations of a national or religious nature.⁵⁵⁷ In reality these were empty promises, aimed to buy time for the new Soviet government to establish itself. It soon became evident that the Soviet government's promises and assurances were not convincing enough for some Central Asians. This resulted in the development of the 'Basmachi' movement, which was a guerrilla uprising against Soviet rule. This movement had no firm ideology, and was very much divided from within. The Basmachi movement was fighting not only for Islam and national independence, but was also motivated by bad economic conditions, stemming from the ruin of the cotton crop.⁵⁵⁸ The Basmachi movement was defeated by Soviet rule in 1929; many of its leaders and supporters fled to Afghanistan. Fifty years later their descendants revived the Basmachi ideals, and once again sparked rebellion; this time they were called the Mujahideen, once again their mission was to protect Islam and resist the Soviets.⁵⁵⁹

Not all Muslims agreed with the Basmachi tactics; there were those that were sympathetic to Communist rule. These were the Communist Muslims like Sultan-Galiev and Mulla-Nur Vahitov. These Islamic Communists preferred to work with the Bolsheviks, hoping that they would be allowed to create their own pan-Islamic

⁵⁵⁷ Amir Taheri, Crescent in a Red Sky: The Future of Islam in the Soviet Union (hereafter Crescent), London, 1989, p. 93

⁵⁵⁸ Geoffrey Wheeler, The People of Soviet Central Asia, (hereafter The People), London, 1966, p.53

⁵⁵⁹ Rashid, Jihad, p. 32

Republic within the Communist empire.⁵⁶⁰ The dream of a Tatar-Bashkir Republic never came true for Galiev and his followers; once the Communist regime established itself it had no reason to appease its Muslim minorities.

The 1930's were a time of tight Soviet control over the Islamic population (and the non-Islamic population). It is important to realise that although the Soviets never encouraged Islam or any other form of religion, they did not always target it or forbid it.⁵⁶¹ In fact, the Soviet constitution included an article on religion, which recognised freedom of conscience and religious practice. They did, however, spread anti-Islamic propaganda; restrict a large number of clergy and mosques, ban Islamic ceremonies and the wearing of the veil, close madrassas and discourage people from reading the Koran. The 1930's were a time of strict Soviet supervision over its Islamic people. After Hitler's invasion of the USSR, Stalin appeased his Muslim population in order to get their support during turbulent times. He did this by creating four Islamic Spiritual Directorates (ISD).⁵⁶² This also allowed the regime to create 'official Islam' (asserting the kind of Islamic practices that would be tolerated and accepted by the boards-this did not properly develop until after the death of Stalin). The four ISDs were: The ISD of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan based in Tashkent, the ISD of European Russia and Siberia based in Ufa, the ISD of Northern Caucasus based in Daghestan, and the ISD of Trans-Caucasia based in Baku.⁵⁶³ In 1944, the regime created the 'Council for Affairs of Religious Cults' (thus reducing Islam to the status of a cult), which was aimed at supervising the activities of the ISDs. This body was under the authority of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union.⁵⁶⁴ Khrushchev's policies on Islam were first characterized by a period of liberalisation. This period did not last long and was replaced by a period of anti-religious campaigns (1959-64), and confined religious activity. This situation was to last until the Gorbachev era.

⁵⁶⁰ Alexander Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, Islam in the Soviet Union, London, 1967, p. 89

⁵⁶¹ Geoffrey Wheeler, The People, p. 97

⁵⁶² Rashid, Jihad, p. 38

⁵⁶³ Yaacov Ro'i, Islam in the Soviet Union from Second World War to Perestroika (hereafter Islam in the Soviet Union), London, 2000, p. 88

⁵⁶⁴ Mehrdad Haghighi, Islam and Politics in Central Asia (hereafter Islam and Politics) New York, 1996, p.26

It is important to remember that although official Islam laid down many restrictions on Islamic practices, unofficial Islam compensated. The regime's rules only applied to official Islam; unofficial Islam was hard to control and was very much the means for keeping Islam alive in Central Asia (by being responsible for hundreds of unregistered mosques and madrassas). People opened their houses to prayers, performed religious ceremonies such as weddings, circumcisions and funerals. Soviet Central Asia's underground Islam never became radicalised. This was a phenomenon that only characterised Islam after independence.

6.2 Islam as a Domestic Religion and Cultural Phenomenon in Central Asia.

This section looks at Islam's cultural influence on the people of Central Asia. It analyses the level of understanding and importance of Islam on their lives by examining the prominence and degree of Islamicisation in each Central Asian country. The role of Islam differs from country to country but the general increase in Islamicisation has an effect on the entire region. Strong Islamic currents in one country often infiltrate to neighbouring countries. This is a reminder that Islam even in the least Islamic countries should not be underestimated.

All native Central Asians are Muslims (except the Bukhara Jews); in general the Uzbeks and the Tajiks are more Islamic-oriented than their neighbours (for reasons given above). As a result of Central Asia's relationship with Russia (the degree of Russification on everyday life, on politics and identity) Islam has not been able to develop and mature in the same way as in other Islamic countries outside the former USSR. For example, Friday is a working day in all the Central Asian countries; as in Russia, Saturdays and Sundays are the days off in the week. All Central Asian countries are secular, and there appears to be a general increase in secular Islamicisation in the region. Moderate, secular Islam is maturing and having a more prominent imprint on Central Asian national identity; examples of this will be discussed below. What has to be kept in mind is that although political Islam is not wanted by most Central Asians, a rise in secular Islam amongst the population provides an opportunity for Islamic extremism and fundamentalism to slowly nurture and develop, especially if the social, political and economic environment encourages such developments. Islamic extremism is political and extremist groups often want the creation of a government that abides to Islamic norms and rules. They would like to see politics conducted according to the Koran and Sharia law (Islamic law). Islamic fundamentalists do not necessarily want the implementation of total political Islam. In other words, they do not necessarily make it an objective to create an Islamic caliphate. The IRP and Hamas are good examples of this kind of political Islam. The majority of

Central Asians do not abide to the five pillars of Islam, in fact in some areas they might not know what the five pillars are. According to Nancy Lubin, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam: 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet', was at times not understood (individuals were able to recite it, but not translate it from the Arabic)⁵⁶⁵; these people still firmly considered themselves as believers. This is an example of secular Islam.

Kazakhstan

The role of Islam's cultural influence on Kazakh society and domestic life is important in the analysis and assessment of the strength of Islam as a power able to affect the mind-set of the population. What role, if any, does it have on society and the behaviour of the Kazakh people? Identifying with Islam has been an increasing phenomenon since the disintegration of the USSR; it has been a time associated with 'Islamic revival' and 'Islamic renaissance'.⁵⁶⁶ In the search for a Kazakh national identity, distinct from that of the Russian, Kazakhs have turned to Islam as a core element of their new identity.⁵⁶⁷ Some Kazakhs feel that the collapse of the USSR created a spiritual vacuum; they feel that Islam is the only power that can fill this void in their identity.⁵⁶⁸ This shows the importance some Kazakhs place on Islam to contribute in creating the 'new' Kazakh identity. It shows the extent to which Islam has infiltrated into the Kazakh mind-set and way of life. Personal Islamic symbols are seen in the everyday life of the Kazakh population. For example, a verse from the Koran or the word 'Allah' in Arabic is often seen hanging from car mirrors, key chains etc.⁵⁶⁹ In addition, there are some prominent mosques in Almaty, such as the one attached to the Egyptian University for Islamic Culture. This is an example of an external Islamic influence affecting the internal milieu of Kazakhstan. It has to be kept in mind that this University is not importing Middle Eastern Islam into Kazakhstan, it is simply

⁵⁶⁵ Nancy Lubin, 'Islam and Ethnic Identity in Central Asia: A View from Below' (hereafter 'Islam and Ethnic Identity') in Mohiaddin Mesbahi (ed.), Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union, Gainesville, Tallahassee, 1994, p.57

⁵⁶⁶ Alexei Malashenko and Ludmila Polonskaia, Islam in Central Asia, Reading, 1994, p. 109

⁵⁶⁷ It appears that some Kazakhs are happy and content with the degree of Russification on their identity; and some would like to distinguish themselves from it. As a result they go in search of nourishing their Islamic identity by studying Islam in Islamic Universities, such as the Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

⁵⁶⁸ Bissenova, 'Central Asian Encounters in the Middle East', Religion, State & Society, pp. 260-261

⁵⁶⁹ This was an observation I made while in Almaty

encouraging Islamic elements in Kazakh culture. Both the Egyptian and Kazakh governments finance the university. It was continuously repeated to me that the aim of the university was to spread Islamic cultural influences and not to encourage the evolution of political Islam. The university was there to help the Kazakhs rediscover their Islamic identity. All the girls in the university wore headscarves. I was told that Russian cultural influence had become so strong in Kazakhstan that people were at times completely out of touch with their Islamic cultural roots. For this reason, Nazarbayev requested the establishment of the university.⁵⁷⁰ The minaret in the mosque next to the university calls out for prayers five times a day; other than in Samarkand, Bukhara and the Ferghana Valley, calls for prayers are a rare phenomenon in Central Asia.

Uzbekistan

According to Munavvarov, "Islam for the Central Asian region is not a new phenomenon but a basis for the unique civilisation of the peoples inhabiting the region. The attempt to eradicate Islam... was an unnatural effort doomed to failure from the very beginning".⁵⁷¹ Nancy Lubin comments that according to a survey conducted in 1993 (aimed at assessing the level of Islamicisation in Central Asia) the Uzbeks' adherence to Islam appeared to be the highest.⁵⁷² Uzbeks go more regularly to mosques (especially Friday prayers) than the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz, although as stated in the introduction, Friday remains part of the working week. Mosques at times can become so crowded that men are seen praying outside.⁵⁷³ The activities of these worshippers are monitored by the state, and the government closely watches functioning mosques. Women in general are more conservatively dressed in Uzbekistan than in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, headscarves are not as frequently seen as in the Middle East, but are more common than in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as are Islamic symbols and Islamic greetings. Madrassas are becoming more and more popular; many parents are confident and respectful of the education provided at these Islamic schools. There are

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Mahmud Fahmi Hijazy, Dean: Professor, The Egyptian University for Islamic Culture, Almaty, November 2005

⁵⁷¹ Zahid I. Munavvarov, 'Uzbekistan', in Mesbahi (ed.), *Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union*, p. 143

⁵⁷² Nancy Lubin, 'Islam and Ethnic Identity', p. 57

⁵⁷³ I saw this at the Namozgokhan mosque in Tashkent

an increasing percentage of students that graduate from these schools every year. These students do not have to pursue a career in anything related to religion; they can take any profession that someone would take who did not attend a madrassa.⁵⁷⁴ The madrassas work together with the Uzbek regime, in guaranteeing that Islam has boundaries that do not cross over into politics. The boys that graduate from madrassas, regardless of the kind of profession they take in later life, are strongly aware of Islamic culture and Islamic teachings. This over the years may contribute to the cultural Islamicisation of the Uzbek population.

Kyrgyzstan

Islam's cultural influence in Kyrgyzstan is as mild as in Kazakhstan in some places and as volatile as in Uzbekistan in others. Islam's influence has more prominence in the south of the country than in the north, although secular Islam is slowly becoming more and more prominent in the north (this point will be supported below).

The Kyrgyz Islamic identity seems to be gradually developing over the years. Although mosques are not very common in the north, and in particularly Bishkek, small and new mosques are found outside city centres. None of these mosques appear to be focal points in Kyrgyz everyday life, as seen in Uzbekistan. In fact, most of the time these mosques stand empty and are relatively bare.⁵⁷⁵ Most Kyrgyz will emphasise that they are Muslims but that they do not practise Islam. Headscarves are rarely seen and Islamic greetings are rarely heard. Nevertheless, over the years the Kyrgyz appear to have become more in touch with Islamic culture.⁵⁷⁶ The country appears to be going down a path of secular Islamicisation; Islam is becoming part of their everyday life and slowly infiltrating into national identity. As Malashenko says, Islam's influence is "felt on the mutual perceptions of people living there (Central

⁵⁷⁴ This information was gathered at the Kukeldash Madrassa in Tashkent by speaking to students and the head-teacher.

⁵⁷⁵ This was an observation made while visiting mosques in the Chui and Issyk- Kul oblasts.

⁵⁷⁶ My first visit to Bishkek was in September 2004; my following visit was in November 2005. In the space of 14 months small changes towards how Islam was perceived were noticed. During my last visit, I realised that in many restaurants and cafes a 'Halal' sign was placed that had not been there previously. In addition many restaurants also had small verses from the Koran hung up on their walls, and even pictures of Mecca.

Asia)".⁵⁷⁷ The Islamic situation in the south is considerably different, especially in the oblasts in the Ferghana Valley. Islam is more rooted in people's behaviour, culture and identity. Mosques are frequently found, with regular worshippers. Headscarves are much more frequently seen, women are more conservatively dressed and Islamic customs and pillars, such as Ramadan and Eid, are abided to.

Tajikistan

The Tajik civil war was a reminder to all those in Central Asia that Islam had the potential to mobilise a large bulk of the population. Its wide support base indicated its strong cultural and political influences. The civil war was a message to Central Asian leaders that Islam was a power not to be under-estimated in the region. The survival of the IRP's struggle from 1992-1997 is evidence that this Islamic party was supported by a large bulk of the population. Important elements of its popularity lay in the fact that it was an Islamic movement, promoting the revival of Islamic culture and habits and also one that showed flexibility in regards to politics. Its objectives have not been aimed at the creation of an Islamic caliphate. For many it appeared to be the best alternative to the regime in power.⁵⁷⁸ It has been estimated that as early as 1992, the IRP had twenty thousand followers. It was also acknowledged by the democrats, who created a joint coalition with the IRP called the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), that without the Islamists they would not have been able to oppose the regime with such great support from the masses.⁵⁷⁹

The Tajik people's adherence to Islam becomes clear during the holy month of Ramadan, where it is estimated that 99% of rural people fast and 60% of people living in cities. It is also estimated that there are 5,000 mosques open for daily prayers, in addition to 237 mosques specifically used for Friday prayers⁵⁸⁰; registration of mosques is not compulsory although some mosques are still closed by the government

⁵⁷⁷ Alexei Malashenko, 'Islam in Central Asia' in Allison and Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security, p. 51

⁵⁷⁸ Yaacov Ro'i, Islam in the CIS: A Threat to Stability (hereafter Islam in the CIS), London, 2001, p. 41

⁵⁷⁹ Aziz Niyazi, 'Tajikistan', in Mesbahi (ed.), p. 183

⁵⁸⁰ 'Tajikistan: International Religious Freedom Report', U.S Department of State, d.o 2001, d.d 24.5.04, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/5719.htm>

authorities for not being registered. It is unknown how many Ismaili (Shi'ite) places of worship there are in the country, as the government does not keep track of them. "The total Tajikistani population is about six million persons, 90% of whom are the most devoted Muslims in Mid-Asia and the most observing of religious duties and Islamic identity".⁵⁸¹

Turkmenistan

The Turkmen, like the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz, are tribal nomadic people, hence many sources indicate that Turkmenistan is the area least interested in Islam. The Turkmenbashi promotes cultural Islam, such as acknowledging and celebrating the Islamic New Year, Eid and Ramadan. The Turkmen people approach elements of Islam, allowed by Niyazov, as symbols of their Turkmen identity. The fact that the Turkmenbashi controls what characteristics of Islam can be followed, make it very difficult to assess how strong Islamic influences really are. Turkmen participation in mosque prayers is very limited but they do abide to Islamic norms on occasions such as weddings, funerals and pilgrimages.⁵⁸² The Turkmenbashi has dedicated a lot of effort in building new and very grand mosques, although it appears that these mosques are not being built for the promotion of Islam or the encouragement of prayers but for the Turkmenbashi's own personal glorification.⁵⁸³

From all the Central Asian countries, Turkmenistan has always had the least number of mosques and lowest extent of religious practices. There do exist voluntary cultural societies whose views are rather extreme. One such group is the 'Sunnah Society'; this group wants the implementation of strict Islamic morality.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸¹ 'Tajikistan: Eastern Spirit in Ramadan', [IslamOnline.net](http://www.islamonline.net/english/ArtCulture/2003/11/article12.shtml), d.o 19.11.03, d.d 3.5.04, <http://www.islamonline.net/english/ArtCulture/2003/11/article12.shtml>

⁵⁸² 'Religion', [U.S Library of Congress](http://countrystudies.us/turkmenistan/14.htm), d.d 23.5.04, <http://countrystudies.us/turkmenistan/14.htm>

⁵⁸³ I was told by a friend who went to Ashghabad that most of the new mosques in the city have sentences from the Rukhnama below Koranic verses on the walls.

⁵⁸⁴ Malashenko and Polonskaia, [Islam in Central Asia](#), p.138

6.3 Official Islam in Central Asia

This section looks at politically approved and state sponsored Islam in each of the five Central Asian countries.

Kazakhstan

The Kazakh Constitution is less precise in matters of religion than the Constitutions of other Central Asian countries. It says: “The Republic of Kazakhstan proclaims itself a democratic, secular, legal and social state whose highest values are an individual, his life, rights and freedoms”, “Everyone shall have the right to determine and indicate or not to indicate his national, party and religious affiliation” and “Everyone has the right of freedom of conscience”.⁵⁸⁵ This generally says that there is respect for religious freedom without government interference. With the escalation of Islamic extremism and fundamentalism in the region (and the world) the government has become more alert to the potentials of Kazakh Islamicisation. Kazakhstan is known for its tolerance of religious activities in comparison to its neighbours. Prior to April 2001, the ‘National Religious Law’ was very flexible with Islamic organisations and did not require religious organisations to register. It stated that all persons are free to practise their religion alone or together with others. It did, however, say that organisations that wish to establish a legal status must register. The law only required ten signatures before an organisation could be registered. By 2001, the threat of Islamic extremism was seriously troubling the Kazakh government; this was perhaps due to the activities of the IMU, HT, and the growing power of the Taliban (more on these issues in the next section). As part of a campaign to control Islamic extremism, the government produced amendments to the National Religious Law.⁵⁸⁶ The new religious law came under strong criticism by religious groups, human rights activists and the OSCE. The new law stated that all unregistered religious groups would be banned; it also required

⁵⁸⁵ The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Section one, Article one, Clause one, Section two, Article nineteen, Clause One and Section two, Article twenty-two, Clause one, d.o 1997, d.d 24.5.04, http://www.president.kz/artcles/state/state_container.asp?Ing=en&art=constitution

⁵⁸⁶ ‘Kazakhstan: International Religious Freedom Report’, U.S Department of State, d.o 26.10.01, d.d 23.5.04, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/5574.htm>

all missionaries to register and did not permit the registration of Muslim organisations that did not confirm to the rules of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Kazakhstan. The creation of Islamic centres of worship also required the approval of the Spiritual Administration; and the number of people required to register a religious organisation rose from 10 to 50.⁵⁸⁷ These tight restrictions on religious freedom did not last very long, and by April 2002 the situation had improved; the new restrictive amendments were cancelled and the religious situation has greatly improved since then. Even though Kazakhstan appears to have been immune to Islamic extremism this does not mean that the situation will always remain this way.

Nazarbaev, although an atheist, has not hesitated from using the Islamic card when he has felt the need to. Kazakhstan, like the other Central Asian countries, is a permanent member of the Organisation for Islamic Conference (OIC). One of the OIC's main objectives is to "promote Islamic solidarity among its member states and to strengthen the struggle of all Muslim people with a view to safeguarding their dignity, independence and national rights".⁵⁸⁸

Uzbekistan

The Islamic connection was not only vital as a component in the creation of national identities in Central Asia, but also as a cohesive element tying all the Central Asians together, giving them a shared and single identity. Karimov swore himself into office with one hand on the Koran and went to Mecca for Hajj; this was a message that Islam would have a strong role in Uzbek life. Perhaps today, Karimov regrets having encouraged that notion, as Islam has the ability of not only being a cohesive force, but also a force that can tear a country apart and plunge it into civil war, as seen in Tajikistan.

⁵⁸⁷ Igor Rotar, 'Kazakhstan: New Restrictive Religion Law Goes to Upper House', Keston News Service, d.o 23.1.02, d.d, 23.4 04, <http://www.starlightsite.co.uk/keston/kns/2002/020123KA-01.htm>

⁵⁸⁸ Edmund Herzig, 'Islam, Trans-nationalism, and Sub-regionalism in the CIS' (hereafter 'Islam, Transnationalism') in Renata Dwan and Oleksande Pavliuk (eds.), Building Security in the New States of Eurasia, Armonk, NY, London, 2000, pp. 246-247

As a secular state, Uzbekistan in theory guarantees religious freedom to all its citizens. Articles 29 and 31 in the Uzbek Constitution state: “Each person has the right of freedom of thought, speech and belief” and “Freedom of conscience is guaranteed for all. Each person has the right to practice any, or no, religion”.⁵⁸⁹ In Uzbekistan religion is separate from the state and the state likes to separate religion from institutions that have the potential to mould and nurture the minds of individuals, such as schools, universities and the media. Article 7 in ‘The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Freedom of Worship and Religious Organisations’ says, “The education system in the Republic of Uzbekistan is separate from religion. Introduction of religious subjects into the academic curriculum is inadmissible. The right to secular education is guaranteed to the citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan irrespective of their religious convictions”.⁵⁹⁰ The Uzbek government is very concerned with keeping control of Islamic religious education. This is clearly seen in article 9 of Uzbekistan’s law on religion: “Religious schools obtain the right to operate after their registration at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan and receiving a corresponding licence. Citizens can enter a higher or secondary religious school after receiving general compulsory secondary education in accordance with the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on education. People teaching religious subjects in religious schools should have religious education and can work with permission from a corresponding central administration body. Private teaching of religious principles is prohibited”.⁵⁹¹ The Islamic University of Tashkent was established in 1999 by the government; it offers both Islamic and secular subjects and has over 750 students.⁵⁹² Students interested in Islamic subjects have the opportunity to study all aspects of Islamic scholarship including jurisdiction, Quranic Arabic, Quranic *tafsir* (exegesis), and hadith (narration of the Prophet). Women are also allowed to study at this university but are not eligible

⁵⁸⁹ The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, d.o 8.12.92, d.d 1.5.04, http://www.ecostan.org/laws/uzb/uzbekistancon_eng.html

⁵⁹⁰ The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Freedom of Worship and Religious Organisations (New Version) as published in ‘Narodnoye Slovo’ from BBC, courtesy of Felix Corley, d.o 15.5.98, d.d 8.5.04, <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/uzbeklaw.html>

⁵⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁵⁹² Igor Rotar (Central Asia Correspondent), The Muslim News, ‘Uzbekistan: State Control of Islamic Religious Education’, d.o 14.5.04, d.d 18.5.04, <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/new.php?article=7355>

to become Imams.⁵⁹³ Almost all women at this university wear the Hijab.⁵⁹⁴ There also exists an Islamic Institute in Tashkent; which hosts students from around the Islamic world. Although all the teachers are Uzbek, they have almost all had their Islamic education abroad, such as in Egypt, Libya and Syria. Most Imams in Uzbekistan graduate from this institution.⁵⁹⁵

People's devotion towards Islam is further seen with the constant increase in the number of mosques in Uzbekistan. In 1991 there were approximately 89 mosques and one madrassa; by the year 2003 the number of mosques has gone up to over 2000 and there were 10 madrassas.⁵⁹⁶ The number of mosques and madrassas is constantly increasing; the government's 1998 'Law on Religion' tried to control this mushrooming of mosques; but has not appeared too successful. Today it is estimated that the number of mosques has reached approximately 5000 and is still on the increase.⁵⁹⁷

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan's secular identity is very much highlighted in its constitution. Chapter one, section two, article one, clause one, and chapter one, section two, article eight, clause three say: "The Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) is a sovereign, unitary, democratic Republic, constructed on the basis of a legal secular state" and "Religions and all cults shall be separated from the State".⁵⁹⁸ Kyrgyzstan's State Commission on Religious Affairs is generally tolerant and stands for freedom of conscience and monitors laws on religion. The 1997 presidential decree states that all religious organisations must be registered with the Commission and the Ministry of Justice before they can be recognised and function as a religious organisation. The government recognised

⁵⁹³ Interview with Zukhriddin M. Khusnidinov, Rector of Tashkent Islamic University, Member of the Council of Ministers and Political Advisor to Karimov, Tashkent, September 2004

⁵⁹⁴ This was a personal observation made while spending time at the university, September 2004

⁵⁹⁵ Hedieh Mirahmadi, General Secretary of the Islamic Supreme Council of America, *The Islamic Renaissance of Uzbekistan* (hereafter *Islamic Renaissance*), d.d 17.5.04, http://jahon.mfa.uz/Z_P_News/muslims.html

⁵⁹⁶ 'Uzbekistan struggles with post-communist future', *The Washington Times*, d.o 27.12.03, d.d 19.5.04, <http://www.uzland.uz/2003/december/29/04.htm>

⁵⁹⁷ 'Uzbekistan', *Religious Freedom World Report*: Prepared by the International Coalition for Religious Freedom, d.o 12.5.04, d.d 17.5.04, <http://www.religiousfreedom.com/wrpt/fsu/uzbekistan.htm>

⁵⁹⁸ *Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic*, 5.5.03, <http://www.kyrgyzstan.org/Law/constitution.htm#c1b>

Islamic holidays as well as Russian Orthodox holidays.⁵⁹⁹ The decree also required people travelling to the Middle East for religious education to register. Only suspected members of HT are refused registration.⁶⁰⁰ This, however, does not mean that the rights of believers are not violated. In southern Kyrgyzstan teachers were told to forbid children from performing their daily prayers, and not allowing girls to wear the hijab (head scarf).⁶⁰¹ Governmental abuse of religious freedom became apparent when schools in Jalalabad in southern Kyrgyzstan did not allow their female pupils to attend classes if they wore the hijab. Disputes erupted over whether this was an infringement on their constitutional rights. Angered believers argued that the constitution and the law of religion clearly stated that everyone would be guaranteed freedom of worship as long as their actions did not go against the existing regime.⁶⁰²

Tajikistan

Tajikistan (as already mentioned in the second chapter) is the only Central Asian country where an Islamic party is represented in the government. Tajikistan is also the only country with a legal Islamic party (IRP). The Tajik Constitution clearly says that the country is secular; but the UTO (mainly composed of Islamists) has 30% of posts in national and local government bodies. This was the condition that resulted in the end of the civil war, and the creation of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC). The UTO's contribution in government affairs is slowly becoming marginalised, which is very much angering the UTO leadership as their participation in government affairs was a prerequisite to peace. Rahmonov's attempts to dwarf the role of the opposition became clear with the amendments to the Tajik Constitution. The changes to Article 28 of the Constitution were the main cause of concern. The terms 'religious', 'democratic' and 'atheist' parties were replaced with the general term

⁵⁹⁹ 'Kyrgyzstan: International Religious Freedom Report', US Department of State, d.o 26.10.01, d.d 15.3.07, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2001/5598.htm>

⁶⁰⁰ Igor Rotar, 'Kyrgyzstan: Religious Freedom Survey', Forum 18, d.o 7.1.04, d.d 12.3.07, http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=222

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Abdulmalik Sharpov, 'The Wearing of the Hijab Remains a Problem of Secondary Schools in Southern Kyrgyzstan', Ferghana.ru, d.o 21.2.07, d.d 18.3.07, <http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=851>

‘political parties’. The head of the opposition, Said Nuri, has said that article 28 “was a pivotal point of the peace in the country” and should therefore never be amended.⁶⁰³

Turkmenistan

Article 11 of the Turkmen Constitution says, “The government guarantees freedom of religion and faith and the equality of religions and faiths before the law. Religious organisations are separate from the government, and may not perform governmental functions”.⁶⁰⁴ In reality the government guarantees none of the above; and has slowly been increasing its role in religious issues. The November 2003 new law on religious activities even further curtailed the rights to freedom of religion and freedom of association. This law “bans any activity by unregistered religious groups. To obtain permission to operate legally, a group must demonstrate, among other things, that it has 500 members”⁶⁰⁵; consequently a large number of small groups are not able to register. This law sparked tremendous disapproval and disappointment to the extent that the US Helsinki Commission wanted to designate Turkmenistan as a ‘Country of Particular Concern’ in the face of mounting control of those seeking to practise their faith.⁶⁰⁶ This was regarded as a violation of religious freedom; and consequently put Turkmenistan on the USA’s list of countries liable to US trade sanctions. In a desperate attempt by Niyazov to avoid sanctions, in March 2004 he announced that the requirements for registration of religious organisations were to be changed. The changes were very minimal; however the new legislation removed the requirement for a religious group to have 500 members before being able to register. It still remains virtually impossible for groups to register, as the fee for registration is equivalent to ten times the average monthly wage.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰³ ‘Tajikistan Daily Digest’, [Eurasianet.org](http://www.erasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/200303/0016.shtml), d.o 19.3.03, d.d 2.3.04, <http://www.erasianet.org/resource/tajikistan/hypermail/200303/0016.shtml>

⁶⁰⁴ [Constitution of Turkmenistan](http://www.ecostan.org/laws/turkm/turkmenistancon.html), d.o 1992, d.d 20.5.04, <http://www.ecostan.org/laws/turkm/turkmenistancon.html>

⁶⁰⁵ ‘Turkmenistan Enacts Highly Repressive Law Against Religion’, [Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: United States Helsinki Commission](http://www.csce.gov/press_csce.cfm?press_id=334), d.o 2.12.03, d.d 13.5.04, http://www.csce.gov/press_csce.cfm?press_id=334

⁶⁰⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ [Economist Intelligence Unit](#), ‘Turkmenistan Country Report’, London, New York, Hong Kong, April 2004

6.4 Political Islam and Islamic Organisations in Central Asia

The causes behind the rise of Islamic extremism, and the potential prospects of the development of political Islam in some of the Central Asian countries are some of the issues this section aims to discuss. This section also analyses the main Islamic organisations in the region, their agendas and their influence in each Central Asian country.

The gradual rise of secular Islam (as seen in the previous section), Islamic extremism and the prospects of political Islam have characterised post-independence Central Asia. Although the region's Soviet legacy and high degree of Russification have kept it immune to Islam in comparison to some of its neighbouring countries in the region, its internal political system and types of leaderships have fuelled Islamic extremism and made it one of the main methods of resistance.⁶⁰⁸ Religious extremism and fundamentalism over the years, and in different countries of the Muslim world, has proved to be the salvation for those living in a system of political oppression, economic stagnation and social dislocation. These are the conditions that the secular elites provide, which fuel the desperation of certain strata of the population. According to Walker, "the deep roots of militancy can be found in the region's dire socio-economic conditions".⁶⁰⁹ When a political system is failing to meet the most fundamental demands of its citizens, social, economic and political frustrations become eruptive. These structural strains produce collective anger and a desire for change.⁶¹⁰ Certain movements appear able to provide support and a notion of stability for these collective grievances. Hence the growing authoritarianism of the Central Asian leaders is not only fuelling sentiments of Islamic extremism but also running the risk of making political Islam a more favourable option to secular authoritarianism.

⁶⁰⁸ Edward W. Walker, 'Islam, Islamism and Political Order in Central Asia', *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003, p. 21

⁶⁰⁹ *ibid.* p. 39

⁶¹⁰ N. Smelser, *The Theory of Collective Behaviour*, New York, 1963, p. 102

Uzbekistan

Since independence, Uzbekistan has been one of the centres for Islamic activity and the evolution of political Islam. As previously stated in this chapter, one of the reasons for this is because of the Uzbek people's long and firm relationship with Islam. The Uzbeks have been known as one of the most Islamicised people of Central Asia. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan's Islamic situation today cannot be blamed on its Islamic legacy. As will be discussed below, Uzbekistan harbours some of the most threatening and powerful Islamic parties in the region. In the process of protecting his regime's power-base, Karimov has subsequently intensified cultural and political Islamic influences.

Uzbekistan's first indication that political Islam and Islamic organisations would have a large influence on the country was as early as 1991. An Islamic organisation called 'Adolat', which was founded in the city of Namangan in the Ferghana Valley, took control of the city and declared that it was more effective at dealing with crime, poverty and hardship than the Karimov regime. This was the first indication that political Islam would be Karimov's main rival, particularly in the Ferghana Valley. As a result of this incident, Karimov launched (one of many campaigns that would characterise his growing authoritarianism and political oppression) a nation-wide crackdown on all Islamic organisations.⁶¹¹ The Ferghana Valley has been the epicentre of Islamic activity not only for Uzbekistan but also for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that also share the Valley. It is where Islamic extremism and fundamentalism flourish and where political Islam has its strongest roots. The Valley is severely over-populated; home to approximately 10 million people and has one of the worst employment rates.⁶¹² It is one of the most conflict-prone regions in Central Asia, and suffers from a wide-range of social, economic and political problems.⁶¹³ Even those closely associated with the Karimov regime will acknowledge that one of the main reasons for

⁶¹¹ Walker, 'Islam, Islamism and Political Order in Central Asia', p. 37

⁶¹² Kenneth Weisbrode, *Central Asia: Prize or Quicksand?* New York, 2001, p.46

⁶¹³ Barnett R. Rubin, *Blood on the Doorstep*, New York, 2002, p. 106

the rise of extremism and political Islam is the socio-economic situation, and that tackling this issue can greatly reduce Islam becoming a strong power in the region.⁶¹⁴

The IMU is Uzbekistan's homegrown organisation. Its origins can be traced to Adolat; when Adolat was disbanded some of its more radicalised members fled to Tajikistan where they joined the IRP and fought in the Tajik civil war. Both its key figures Tokhir Yuldeshev and Juma Namangani established their power-base in Tajikistan from 1992 to 1997. When the peace agreement was signed in 1997, marking the end of the Tajik civil war, the more radicalised members of the IRP, including Yuldeshev and Namangani fled Tajikistan, refusing to enter a coalition with the secular Rahmonov regime. At the same time, Karimov launched a new campaign severely cracking down on religious individuals and Islamic organisations, this time also including relatives of suspected Islamists. As a result of this crackdown, victims of Karimov's campaign had only Namangani and Yuldeshev to help them resist Karimov's wrath. As a result the IMU was created; its new headquarters were with the Taliban in Afghanistan.⁶¹⁵

The Tashkent bombings on 16 February 1999 were the first clash between the IMU and the Uzbek authorities. This event was the start of a nation-wide crackdown on organisations and individuals that adhered to any form and level of Islam. This also provided for Karimov an excuse to crackdown on all opposition, Islamic or not. "By forcing all opposition underground into increasingly extremist positions, the autocratic leaders have fostered an environment in which the population has begun to embrace a volatile force, Islamic militancy".⁶¹⁶ Six bombs (planted in cars) exploded near government institutions in Tashkent; for the first time the stability of Uzbekistan and its neighbours was put into question. Within hours of the explosions Karimov had not only blamed the IMU but also named the leader of Erk (Mohammed Solih) as a suspect. The implication of Solih did not come as a surprise as he had run against Karimov in the 1991 presidential election; Karimov for years had been desperate to

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Zukhriddin M. Khusnidinov, Rector of Tashkent Islamic University, Member of the Council of Ministers and Political Advisor to Karimov, Tashkent, September 2004

⁶¹⁵ Rashid, *Jihad*, p. 145-147

⁶¹⁶ Ahmed Rashid, 'Asking for Holy War: Ruling Out Democracy Results in Militant Islamic Opposition', *International Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research*, d.o 9.11.00 d.d 2.4.04, http://iicas.org/english/enlibrary/libr_22_11_00_1.htm

eliminate him as an oppositional figure.⁶¹⁷ As a result of the bombings, hundreds of mosques were closed throughout the country; the Karimov regime argued that it was in mosques that the IMU was plotting terrorist activities against the regime.⁶¹⁸ As often is the case with Islam, when pushed underground it radicalises and appears to be the salvation for all those suffering under an oppressive political situation. A few months later the IMU declared Jihad against the Karimov regime, which was soon followed by an escalation of violence that would not only affect Uzbekistan but also Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁶¹⁹

The first attack by the IMU occurred in Batken, in Kyrgyzstan. This armed incursion lasted from August to September 1999. This did not only highlight the strength of the IMU and their ability to spread to other Central Asian countries; it also highlighted the Uzbek authorities' aggression to eliminate the IMU. As a result of the incursion, the Karimov regime, without the permission of the Kyrgyz government, sent warplanes over Kyrgyzstan in order to kill the insurgents. This act caused tension between the two countries, especially as the Kyrgyz government not only felt that its country's sovereignty and integrity had been violated, but also because it was verbally attacked and blamed by Karimov for being unable to resist armed incursions. As a result, Akayev went to the Russians for help.⁶²⁰

The IMU returned to Afghanistan in the winter on 1999 and intended to strengthen their fighting skills before a new campaign. It was during this time that Osama Bin Laden supplied and funded the IMU. There is no clear indication revealing the amount of support given to the IMU by Bin Laden; but it is clear that Namangani and Bin Laden had a close relationship. Namangani is often referred to as Bin Laden's right-hand man, and died fighting against the Americans in Tora-Bora in Afghanistan in

⁶¹⁷ Asia Times Online, Central Asia/ Siberia, Newline: Central Asia, Transcaucasia and Russia, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Tashkent Bombings: Opposition Leader Accused', <http://www.atimes.com/c-asia/AC09Ag01.html>, d.o 9.3.99, d.d 3.4.04

⁶¹⁸ A large number of mosques I visited in Uzbekistan were non-functioning mosques. I was told that this had been the case since the Tashkent bombings in 1999. The government had ordered that these mosques be closed to worshippers.

⁶¹⁹ Abdumannob Polat and Nickolai Butkevich, 'Unravelling the Mystery of the Tashkent Bombings', *International Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research*, d.o 4.12.00, d.d 22.7.06 http://iicas.org/english/Krsten_4_12_00.htm

⁶²⁰ Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the CIS*, p 76.

2001.⁶²¹ The second Batken incursion occurred in the summer of 2000. Namangani returned to Tajikistan, with hundreds of well-trained IMU fighters. His aim was to move his men into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and launch several attacks from different directions aimed at the Uzbek government. Once again one of the main locations for attack was Batken, and once again the Kyrgyz government and its people found themselves in the middle of a bloody fight between the IMU and the Uzbek government.⁶²² On September 15, the Karimov regime finally received the backing from the American Administration it had long hoped for. The Department of State designated the IMU as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation under American Law.⁶²³

By the summer of 2001, the region was getting prepared for another attack by the IMU. Over the years the IMU network had become more widespread and sophisticated. Just as the IMU was escalating its activity in the summer/autumn of 2001, the September 11 events occurred. The aftermath of September 11 and the war on Afghanistan appeared to have saved the Central Asian regimes from further IMU incursions. The IMU's increasing power from 1999 to 2001 made the prospects of political Islam not only a nation-wide concern but also loomed over the future security of Central Asia.⁶²⁴

Since the start of the war on terror and America's campaign in Afghanistan, the IMU has been greatly weakened. The main navigators of Islamic influences today appear to be HT, although the force of the IMU has by no means disappeared. Events in March 2004 brought the IMU to the forefront of the Uzbek political stage. A series of explosions in Bukhara and Tashkent, killing over forty people, was traced to the IMU. In July of the same year an Islamic organisation, thought to be either HT or the IMU was believed to have carried out the first suicide bombings.⁶²⁵ The target of their wrath

⁶²¹ *People's Daily* (Beijing), 'Tajik Sources Confirm Death of Bin Laden's 2nd Self', d.o 20.11.01, d.d 5.4.04, http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200111/20/eng20011120_84994.shtml

⁶²² Rashid, *Jihad*, pp. 167-180

⁶²³ Statement by Richard Boucher, Spokesman, *U.S Department of State*: Office of the Spokesman, Intent to Designate as Foreign Terrorist Organisation the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, d.o 15.9.00, d.d 7.4.04, <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2000/09/irp-000915-uzbek1.htm>

⁶²⁴ Interview with Zukhriddin Khusnidinov

⁶²⁵ Having dedicated time and effort researching these two organisations it appears more likely that the IMU or a revived version of the IMU were responsible for this event. Throughout its existence in Central Asia, HT has never been engaged in acts of violence. This characteristic (amongst others) is

this time extended to Karimov's foreign friends. The American and Israeli embassies were targeted making this event the first instance where the centre of the conflict no longer revolved around the internal situation in Uzbekistan and Karimov's growing authoritarianism, but also on Karimov's foreign policy and a response to 'the war on terror' seen by many extremists as 'a war on Islam'.⁶²⁶ This is an example when Central Asian Islamic organisations are affected by external Islamic influences.

HT appears to be the strongest Islamic organisation in Central Asia today. Unlike the IMU it has branches throughout the region and the broadest support base. The organisation is not homegrown and has its roots in the Middle East and headquarters in London. HT in Central Asia has a regional agenda and not a global one. Its concerns and objectives are bound to the region. Although HT globally advocates the creation on a worldwide Islamic caliphate, HT's rhetoric in Central Asia is only aimed at Central Asia.⁶²⁷ Its centre of activity is in the Ferghana Valley, in particular in the Uzbek section of the Valley. It has two characteristics that make it particularly appealing to impoverished and politically oppressed citizens. Unlike many Islamic extremist organisations it has never been involved in acts of violence (although the Karimov regime has tried to prove the opposite). According to people inside and outside Central Asia, it has never been involved in guerrilla activities, kidnappings or any acts of terror.⁶²⁸ It advocates itself through peaceful means. It inspires to spread Islam by slowly educating and enlightening people about Islam. It does so by spreading Islamic leaflets and booklets in the Ferghana Valley about the justice and equality that Islam can bring to society. HT does not like the idea of forcing Islam on a society; it believes that Islam should evolve from the bottom upward and not the other way round. Its objectives are to persuade society to accept the ideas it is spreading. It is believed that in 2006 the number of members in HT in Uzbekistan is from 10,000 to 15,000.⁶²⁹ HT is also open to the use of modern technology to spread its influence,

responsible for HT's popularity in the region. It does not appear rational that HT would divert from its known objectives of peaceful Islamic struggle.

⁶²⁶ Svante E. Cornell, 'Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 17, no. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 632-633

⁶²⁷ Interview with Mahmud Fahmi Hijazy, Dean: Professor, The Egyptian University for Islamic Culture, Almaty, November 2005

⁶²⁸ Rashid, *Jihad*, p. 132

⁶²⁹ Emmanuel Karagiannis, 'Political Islam in Uzbekistan: Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 58, no. 2, March 2006, pp. 265-266

such as the Internet. These signs of compatibility with the 21st century make it more appealing to the younger generations.⁶³⁰ “The party aims are the correct revival of the Umma through enlightened thought”.⁶³¹

HT’s mobilising powers became evident during the Andijan massacres in May 2005. The events that occurred in May 2005 in the Ferghana Valley revealed the strength of Islam with its competing influences more than any other event in recent Uzbek history. The violence was triggered by the trial of 23 businessmen in Andijan for belonging to ‘Akramiya’, one of HT’s branch organisations. On 12 May gunmen stormed the jail where the businessmen were held and released everyone in prison. The next day a group of people gathered in the centre of Andijan against what they considered was the unfair treatment of these businessmen. As the day passed the atmosphere became more volatile and tense. It is believed that many of the protesters had gathered in the square not demanding the creation of an Islamic caliphate but asking for better social, political and economic conditions.⁶³² It was the authorities’ reaction to this crowd that provoked Islamic resistance and behaviour in Andijan and other areas of the Ferghana Valley. It is estimated that over 500 innocent civilians, including women and children were killed in Andijan by the Uzbek authorities. It was no surprise that the Andijan events fuelled Islamic sentiments.

What happened in the city of Korasuv, another centre for HT activity, indicated the level of Islamicisation in the Ferghana Valley. It was also a reminder that although many in the country did not prefer the creation of an Islamic state, it remained an option at times better than what the Karimov regime was offering. Following the massacre at Andijan, a group of Islamic activists in Korasuv held an uprising and declared that they wanted to establish an Islamic administration based on the Koran.⁶³³ The Uzbek army eventually recaptured the city and the Islamic uprising was crushed. Islam’s political influence had once again shown the extent of its strength.

⁶³⁰ Interview with Mahmud Fahmi Hijazy

⁶³¹ HT official website, <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/english>

⁶³² ‘Uzbekistan: The Blood-Red Revolution’, *The Economist*, May 1st-27th 2005, p. 67

⁶³³ Ian MacWilliam, ‘Uzbek Rebel Spells Out Aims’, *BBC NEWS*, d.o 18.5.05, d.d 20.4.06, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4558759.stm>

The second characteristic, which helps make HT popular with a wide support base, is its economic assistance and support to the impoverished population.⁶³⁴ This is a mobilising characteristic of many Islamic organisations (Hamas is a good example of this). HT does not have the same level of economic resources as some Islamic organisations in the Middle East but what it does provide earns it respect and adherence from the local population. Many of its high-ranking members (especially in the Ferghana Valley) own small businesses, and provide employment to the people of the town. HT members also collect donations after Friday prayers or important Islamic festivals and distribute them to the poorest and most needy.⁶³⁵

Tabligh Jamaat is another Islamic organisation, which is particularly active in Uzbekistan. It does not have the same level of popularity as the other organisations discussed above, but is becoming a growing threat to the Uzbek regime. The organisation's roots are in India, and it was first introduced to Uzbekistan in the 1970's. It aims to encourage people to follow the norms of Islam as stated in the Koran; in the past few years it has attracted many that are opposed to the Karimov regime.⁶³⁶

Kyrgyzstan

Islamic extremism and political Islam have been on the rise in Kyrgyzstan regardless of the high levels of Russification in the north of the country. As mentioned above, part of the Ferghana Valley is also situated in Kyrgyzstan and shares many of the social, economic and political conditions as in the Uzbek part of the Valley. Korasuv, for example, lies very close to the Kyrgyz borders and many Islamic activists fled to Kyrgyzstan as a result of the Andijan massacres. There exist between two to three thousand HT members in Kyrgyzstan; HT has even been reported to be functioning in the north of the country as well. As with the case in Uzbekistan, the secular authoritarian regime of Akayev and the increasing similar one of Bakiyev are the

⁶³⁴ The sources of HT's finances are unknown. The organisation has a strong hierarchical system, therefore only those at the very top know where the money comes from.

⁶³⁵ Interview with Mahmud Fahmi Hijazy

⁶³⁶ Gulnoza Saidazimova, 'Uzbekistan: Tabligh Jamaat Group Added to Uzbek Government's Blacklist', Radio Free Europe: Radio Liberty, d.o 20.12.04, d.d 23.4.06, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/12/6ebc842e-4779>

reasons for the rise in Islamic extremism and the strength in Islam's political influence.⁶³⁷ In the city of Osh in the Ferghana Valley, HT members stand in market places and talk about the corruptness of Bakiyev regime, and how an Islamic regime would be able to deal with the hardships of Kyrgyz life in ways the government has proved unable to. This kind of talk often attracts half a dozen people to stand and listen to the benefits of political Islam.⁶³⁸

Kazakhstan

Islam's political influence in Kazakhstan is not as strong as the two countries mentioned above. Kazakhstan has better social and economic conditions than any of its neighbours; this reduces the risks of collective grievance, which inspires Islamic extremism. Kazakhstan also has a mild Islamic legacy and does not border the Ferghana Valley. In spite of this there is some HT activity in Kazakhstan, especially in the south of the country in and near Uzbek-populated Chimkent. In addition, the threat of political Islam gaining strong influence in any of the other Central Asian countries is also a risk to Kazakhstan as Islamic organisations could spill over into Kazakhstan. It was particularly alarming for the Kazakh government to discover that members of Tablighi Jamaat functioned in the country.⁶³⁹

Tajikistan

Tajikistan is the only Central Asian country where an Islamic organisation is not only legal but constitutes part of the government. The role of the IRP in the Tajik government has already been covered in the chapter related to the internal politics of the region. The IRP is neither a purely Tajik organisation (like the IMU is for Uzbekistan), nor a world-wide Islamic organisation like HT. It is a regional Islamic organisation, present predominantly in Tajikistan but also in other Central Asian countries and Russia. The roots of the IRP in Tajikistan can be traced back to the

⁶³⁷ Igor Rotar, Interview with Sadykzhan Kumuluddin, President of the Islamic Centre of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and Former Mufti, *The Jamestown Foundation*, d.o 3.12.04, d.d 23.4.06, http://jamestown.org/news_details.php?news_id=34

⁶³⁸ Interview with Iris Beybutova, November 2005

⁶³⁹ Alex Alexiev, 'Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions', *Middle East Forum: Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 1, Winter 2005, <http://www.meforum.org/article/686>

Basmachis. Other than those reviving the Basmachi ideology, members of the organisation include the unofficial ulema that was forced underground during the Soviet period, the official ulema, and Sufi followers.⁶⁴⁰

The civil war in Tajikistan became the most striking evidence of how Islam's cultural and political influences could play a pivotal role in plunging a country into civil war. The role of the IRP was an example to other Central Asian countries that Islam had the potential of shaking the political and social structures of a country. According to Olimova, "even though Islam failed to over-ride the internal Tajik division, a radical politicised Islam emerged out of the crisis as the most effective opposition force".⁶⁴¹ The eventual legalisation of the IRP served as a good example of how to tame Islamic organisation.

Throughout the civil war, the IRP had a wide range of members in its ranks. There were those that promoted Islamic extremism, violence and the creation of an Islamic state, and those that were more concerned with spreading a moderate and spiritual form of Islam. The latter group of people, led by Nuri, became the representatives of the IRP after the civil war. Although Rahmonov's elite has persistently tried to limit the political scope of the IRP, it has remained a relatively strong alternative to the Rahmonov regime. In addition, it has also developed a socio-economic development programme aimed at providing aid, support and advice to women and the youth. The IRP has become living evidence of how an Islamic party, with a legitimate political role, can function in a secular state.⁶⁴²

Turkmenistan

Although Turkmenistan has all the social, political and economic malaise that have contributed to the evolution of Islamic extremism and political Islam in some of the Central Asian countries, Islamic influences appear to be mild. This is a phenomenon

⁶⁴⁰ Rashid, *Jihad*, pp. 95-96

⁶⁴¹ Saodat Olimova, 'Islam and the Tajik Conflict', in Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (eds.), *Islam and Central Asia*, Washington, D.C, 2000

⁶⁴² Saodat Olimova and Muzaffar Olimov, 'The Islamic Renaissance Party', *Conciliation Resources*, d.d 21.4.06, <http://www.c-r.org/accord/tajik/accord10/islamic.shtml>

that has remains relatively unexplained, especially when one considers the rise of Islam as a power not only in Central Asia but also globally. There are a variety of reasons, which provide an explanation for Turkmenistan's immunity to political and extremist Islam. A strong Islamic legacy does not exist amongst the traditionally nomadic people of the country. Ethnic and tribal loyalties still very much exist in Turkmenistan; this has inevitably diluted the mobilising effect of Islam. Turkmenistan does not border the Ferghana Valley and although this country borders Afghanistan, its experience as a Soviet Republic has limited the influence of Islam on culture, making it years behind the levels of Islamicisation in Afghanistan. Niyazov's policies to isolate Turkmenistan and the Turkmen people have also contributed to this country being sheltered from Islamic influences. While other Central Asian countries provoked Islamic extremists by supporting the war on terror, by either just saying they supported it, sending troops to Iraq or allowing American military bases to be set up on their soil, Niyazov remained neutral on this issue.⁶⁴³ Niyazov's complete manipulation of all state apparatus, total domination of his population and the merging of anything related to Islam with the state (which revolves around him) has made Islamic influences hard to research. If they exist they are very much underground, and secretive. This does not mean they will remain this way forever. In regards to Islamic extremism and political Islam in Turkmenistan, only time will tell the magnitude of influence.

⁶⁴³ Swati Parashar, 'Turkmenistan: A Central Asian State without Religious Extremism', Observer Research Foundation, d.o 30.9.04, d.d 1.5.06, <http://observerindia.com/analysis/A275.htm>

6.5 External Islamic Influences on Central Asia: The Impact of Afghanistan and the Arab Countries on Politics and Society in Central Asia

As previously discussed in this chapter there are a variety of factors, which have contributed to the rise of Islamic awareness in Central Asia. Although this thesis argues that the growth of Islamic influences is mainly a result of internal factors in Central Asia, this section shows how external Islamic influences have also played a role in the Islamicisation of Central Asia. This section will look at the Taliban as an external Islamic influence and also at other external Islamic influences coming from the Arab world.

The Taliban's shadow over Central Asia did not only encourage a wave of Islamic awareness, and support Islamic extremist movements; in some countries it also contributed to the further political crackdown on civil liberties in the name of combating extremism and terrorism. Therefore, the Taliban regime had an effect on most of the ruling elites of Central Asia as well as on society. In addition, the Taliban have been weakened but not defeated; their underground existence still contributes to the unstable situation in the region. The continued struggle for survival of the Taliban in Afghanistan is portrayed regularly through their frequent attacks on American forces.⁶⁴⁴

The Taliban found their roots in an Islamic school in Pakistan, which encouraged a school of thought called 'deobandism'. The movement's triumph with the Afghan people was a result of many years of civil war, instability and profound frustration. The exhausted Afghan people were ready to accept the strictest forms of discipline if security was guaranteed.⁶⁴⁵ Instability and people's desperate need for security and

⁶⁴⁴ AlJazeera.Net, 'Blast Hits US Convoy in Afghanistan', d.o 13.6.05, d.d 13.6.05, <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/992881DA-6406-4>

⁶⁴⁵ Martin McCauley, Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Modern History, London, New York, 2002, p.78

peace brought the Taliban to power. This is a lesson the Central Asian leaders should examine thoroughly; the more desolate the main bulk of the population is, the more likely they are to adopt desperate measures to alleviate the imbroglio they live in. Although there exist many similarities between the Afghans and the Central Asians, there exists one great difference, which makes them very distinct from one another. The effects of Russification in all its forms have created an environment, which has helped repel the Islamic influence of the Taliban. Peter Marsden supports this point when he argues that the Soviet experience in Central Asia has created a different society to the one that exists in Afghanistan.⁶⁴⁶ It has been argued that the Taliban regime, and their protection of Al-Qaida has triggered a 'new cold war'. A conflict between the west (mainly the USA) and the Islamic world has unfolded post September 11 (although the origins of this run back for decades).⁶⁴⁷ This issue is of relevance to this section, and to Central Asia because it cannot be assumed that because this region is so deeply Russified, it will remain immune to the wave of Islamicisation affecting most of the Muslim world.

The collapse of Najibullah's regime in Afghanistan in 1992, and the start of the Tajik civil war marked the start of a period of intense Russian and Central Asian fear regarding the rise of Islamic movements and extremist organisations. Throughout the early 1990's most leaders in the region feared that extremism and fundamentalism would spread from one country to another like a contagious disease. From the three Central Asian countries that border Afghanistan (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), Uzbekistan was the most concerned and active in protecting its borders with Afghanistan. Karimov feared that if the Taliban controlled Afghanistan then there would be floods of Afghani refugees trying to gain access to Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia. His main fear focused on the religious influences these refugees would bring with them. He knew that this form of imported Islamicisation would be welcomed amongst certain Islamists in his country.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁶ Peter Marsden, The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan, Cape Town, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, 2002, p.143

⁶⁴⁷ Fred Halliday, Two Hours that Shook the World: September 11, 2001: Causes and Consequences, London, 2002, p.36

⁶⁴⁸ Anthony Hyman, 'Russia, Central Asia and the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban, London, 2001, pp.110-111

In 1996 a new stage of concern over the rise of the Taliban emerged. This was a result of the Taliban's victory in Kabul. An emergency meeting followed in Almaty in October 1996 of four Central Asian presidents (Niyazov did not attend), and the Russian prime minister (El'tsin was ill). This further highlights the joint security concerns that bind Russia and Central Asia. This was one of the first incidents where Russia and the Central Asian countries openly spoke about combating the threat to 'regional stability'. The participants of the Almaty meeting issued a warning to the Taliban not to expand beyond the borders of Afghanistan.⁶⁴⁹ The Almaty meeting was evidence that Russian and the Central Asian leaders, were by far more troubled over the emergence of a strong Islamic organisation than any other regional or western country. This fear further intensified in 1997/1998, when the Taliban triumphed in Mazar i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan.

The Tashkent bombings in 1999, and the IMU incursions on Batken in 1999 and 2000 aimed at toppling the Karimov regime, marked the escalating power of the Taliban. Although the Taliban cannot be blamed for Karimov's increasingly repressive measures against Islamic and non-Islamic movements (which also contributed to these incidents), they can be given partial responsibility for Karimov's paranoia in regards to the rise of political Islam in Uzbekistan. The IMU is not a creation of the Taliban, but its strength can be attributed to the support it received from Afghanistan. After the Tajik civil war ended, Afghanistan was used by the IMU as a safe haven and training ground for offensives into Uzbekistan. The two incursions on Batken (discussed in the previous section) would have been harder to implement had it not been for the aid given to them by the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Yuldeshev, the IMU leader, had come into contact with the Taliban in 1997, and was certain that they would help, and train his organisation against the Uzbek government. Not only did the IMU and the Taliban share similar beliefs regarding the creation of an Islamic state, they both had to gain from the downfall of the Karimov regime, which had declared itself anti-Taliban and had supported the anti-Taliban opposition.⁶⁵⁰ The IMU's contact with Bin Laden⁶⁵¹ (thanks to the Taliban) have given it a calibre of training that it would have otherwise

⁶⁴⁹ *ibid.* p. 106

⁶⁵⁰ Rashid, *Jihad*, pp.147-148

⁶⁵¹ Rohan Gunaratna, 'Al-Qaeda', in Mary Buckley and Rick Fawn (eds.), *Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11, Afghanistan and Beyond*, New York, London, 2003, p.37

never have achieved. A combination of Karimov's continued radical authoritarianism and the IMU's professional training has kept this notorious and feared Islamic organisation still alive in the region.

The Taliban regime and the civil war in Tajikistan are regularly associated together-as if the latter was a result of the former. It has often been argued in Moscow and in the Central Asian capitals that the events in Afghanistan had a direct impact on the Tajik civil war and on the events in Andijan in May 2005. It has been more convenient for the Central Asian governments to put the blame on Kabul, than find reasons that they were responsible for.⁶⁵² Moscow on the other hand has not wished to antagonise any of the regimes by putting the blame on them either. The IRP undisputedly had links with the ethnic Tajik Mujahiddin (especially Massoud), and many of its members had been profoundly influenced by the war in Afghanistan. In 1995, one of the UTO's headquarters was in Afghanistan; from there they frequently launched guerrilla attacks on the Tajik government. The ethnic Tajik Mujahiddin and the IRP had similar ideological motives, motives that were more concerned with fighting a communist styled regime than the spread of Wahhabism. Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby connect these two groups when they say, "In many ways the Tajik opposition correlated with Afghan resistance".⁶⁵³ There were also those in the IRP with more fanatic views. After the peace agreement in 1997, which ended the civil war, those members created the IMU.

Today the IRP has proved to be a moderate Islamic party willing to live in a secular state so long as it is legal, and has a voice in government matters. The IRP is and always has been a completely different Islamic organisation to the IMU, HT and the Taliban. Other Islamic parties have not offered room for compromise, nor have other Central Asian governments. There was also fear that the floods of refugees from Afghanistan might help spread religious ideas.⁶⁵⁴ Rahmonov was angered by the

⁶⁵² Hyman, 'Russia, Central Asia and the Taliban', p.104

⁶⁵³ Ralph H. Magnus and Eden Naby, Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid, Boulder, Colorado, Oxford, 2002, p.175

⁶⁵⁴ Bahar Jalali, 'Islam as a Political Force in Central Asia', International Research and Exchanges Board, d.o 27.1.00, d.d 17.6.05, <http://www.irex.org/pubs/policy/islam.asp>

international community's lack of interest with what was happening in his country.⁶⁵⁵ This is one of the reasons that further bind Tajikistan to Russia. Russia's military aid and peace negotiations helped pull the country out of further turmoil.

Although Kyrgyzstan does not share a border with Afghanistan it is a country prone to Islamicisation. The prominent divide between the north and south, in terms of the effects of Russification and Islamic awareness, have caused much concern to Bishkek. This was further intensified with the increasing power of the Taliban. Bishkek's main area of concern was the Gorno-Badakhshan region in Tajikistan, which provides a buffer zone between Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. It was a region notoriously known for being congested with Tajik Islamic fighters.⁶⁵⁶

Akayev's concern regarding the stability of his country was further intensified after the fall of Mazar i-Sharif, and the apparent collapse of the anti-Taliban forces. He immediately called an emergency meeting for the other Central Asian leaders and Russia. At this meeting it was decided that joint military forces and security chiefs would make a tour inspection on the Kyrgyz Osh region in the Ferghana Valley.⁶⁵⁷

Akayev's fears regarding the safety of his country from the Islamic threat in Afghanistan became a reality in the summer of 1999 and 2000. Kyrgyzstan was targeted by the IMU, which was being protected and nourished by the Taliban, as a route for gaining access to Uzbekistan. The Batken incidents (already discussed in this chapter) automatically made the Taliban regime of grave concern to Kyrgyzstan. Batken was evolving into a recruiting ground for the IMU. It became the location where Kyrgyz extremists found their way to Taliban and IMU camps.⁶⁵⁸ The Taliban regime, even though it did not border all Central Asian countries, was bound to have a limited but noticeable impact on most of the region.

⁶⁵⁵ Hyman, 'Russia, Central Asian and the Taliban', p.109

⁶⁵⁶ Neamatollah Nojumi, The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilisation, Civil War, and the Future of the Region (hereafter The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan), New York, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2002, p.190

⁶⁵⁷ Hyman, 'Russia, Central Asia and the Taliban', p.112

⁶⁵⁸ Rashid, Jihad, p.162

As the power of the Taliban became more prominent, the worries of an Islamic spill over or ideological seep into Central Asia became a growing concern for all the Central Asian leaders-all but Niyazov. Niyazov's lack of concern in regards to the volatile and fanatic Islamic force growing next door to Turkmenistan is a further reflection of how disillusioned he is with his own power.

Niyazov officially took a neutral position towards the Taliban and abstained from the meeting in Almaty. Turkmen officials insisted that the growing force of the Taliban was not expected to create any complications for Turkmenistan.⁶⁵⁹ Niyazov repeatedly stated that not only do the Turkmen people and the Afghan people have fraternal and historic ties, but also that his country had a good relationship with the Taliban and consequently refuses to meddle in Afghan internal affairs.⁶⁶⁰ Turkmenistan's only sign of concern with the Taliban occurred after September 11. It was perhaps only at this stage that Niyazov realised that the threat the Taliban and Al-Qaida had emitted had not only been regional but global as well. At this stage he supported the formation of a permanent UN body under strict guidelines and clear goals to combat the activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. He refused to allow the USA to conduct military operations against Afghanistan from his country.⁶⁶¹

There were other advantages for Niyazov in recognising the Taliban regime and refusing to join the anti-Taliban coalition, which Russia and the other Central Asian countries had helped set up. Niyazov's firm relationship with Russia (this has been discussed in the chapter dealing with Russian influences in Central Asia) has not stopped the Turkmenbashi from wanting to divert his energy exports away from Russia, and towards other markets. Therefore, it is not surprising that Turkmenistan was the only Central Asian country willing to woo the Taliban in order to guarantee the development of the Turkmen-Afghan-Pakistan pipeline (already discussed in chapter 5).⁶⁶²

⁶⁵⁹ Hyman, 'Russia, Central Asia and the Taliban', p.112

⁶⁶⁰ Marsden, *The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan*, p.138

⁶⁶¹ Shams-Ud-Din and Bhaswati Sarkar, *Afghanistan and Central Asia in the New Great Game*, New Delhi, 2003, p.144

⁶⁶² Rashid, *Taliban*, p.152

Kazakhstan appeared to be the country least affected by the Taliban regime. Unlike the other four Central Asian countries, it neither shares a border with Afghanistan nor has regions where extremism flourishes, such as in the Ferghana Valley. It is one of the most linguistically and behaviorally Russified countries in Central Asia, and the least Islamic. The fear, however, was not that Islamic movements would suddenly evolve in Kazakhstan, but that the Taliban's influence over the more religious Central Asian countries and Islamic organisations would eventually infiltrate into Kazakh society. Astana regarded the Taliban issue as a regional problem, and not only a threat to the countries it was most prone to influence. Nazarbayev was so alarmed at the Taliban's elevation to power, that he hosted the Almaty meeting after the fall of Kabul.⁶⁶³

Other Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East, have had external Islamic influences on the region as well. After independence, as seen in the literature written soon after 1991,⁶⁶⁴ the Middle East was predicted to have a large impact on the development of the region because of the religious ties. Later literature places less emphasis on the Middle East and Central Asia and it became evident that Middle Eastern Islamic influences were limited. Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia have undeniably played a role in the Islamic revival of the region, but their efforts have not resulted in major change. Countries like Egypt are geographically far, and do not have the financial means to get heavily involved in the Islamic revival of Central Asia. In addition, the Egypt government is facing its own problems with the Islamic Brotherhood. Projects such as the creation of the Egyptian Islamic University in Almaty have developed between the Egyptian and Kazakh governments and are examples of government controlled Middle Eastern Islamic influences. These kinds of influences tend to have less radicalising affects, and certainly do not encourage political or extremist Islam. Arab countries have played a large role in offering Islamic education to Central Asia students. Alima Bissenova gives a good account of this in chapter 3 and the problems that can arise as a result of mixed Russian and Islamic identities.⁶⁶⁵ Since independence a large number of Central Asians have travelled to Al-Azhar University in Cairo to learn about Islam. These individuals return home

⁶⁶³ Mehrotra, *Taliban and the Afghan Turmoil*, p.110

⁶⁶⁴ See footnote 16 as an example.

⁶⁶⁵ See footnote 195

bringing with them Islamic influences from the Middle East, which can slowly affect the culture of their society.⁶⁶⁶

As a result of its financial means, Saudi Arabia has played a considerable role in the revival of Islam in Central Asia. The Saudi Arabian government and Saudi Arabian wealthy individuals have played a role in this. After independence some of the Central Asian leaders were eager to form ties with the Islamic Kingdom in the hope of receiving financial assistance. The Central Asian leaders were willing to allow the Saudi government to ship millions of Korans to the region and to construct numerous religious establishments and madrassas.⁶⁶⁷ In the early 1990's and in 1999, the Saudi government paid all expenses for those who wanted to go on the holy pilgrimage to Mecca.⁶⁶⁸

The main Islamic threat coming from Saudi Arabia was from missionaries. These missionaries flocked to the region to preach and open schools. At first they were welcomed, later the Central Asian authorities realised the radicalising affects these people were having on their population and put entry restrictions on them or expelled them.⁶⁶⁹

One of the most radicalising external Islamic influences has come in the form of Wahhabism. The origins of this movement come from Saudi Arabia and have had some impact on Central Asian politics and society. During the Soviet-Afghan war, many Arab volunteers went to Afghanistan to help fight the Soviets. They reached Afghanistan through Muslim Brotherhood networks funded by Saudi Arabia. In the 1990's some of the most religious movements became even more radicalised and anti-western. These were the movements that Arab volunteers came in contact with when they travelled to Afghanistan and Pakistan after the collapse of the USSR. These volunteers became further radicalised once in Afghanistan and have consequently

⁶⁶⁶ Shirin Akiner, 'The Contestation of Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia (hereafter 'The Contestation of Islam'), in Hannah Carter and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia, London, New York, 2004, p. 86

⁶⁶⁷ Martha Brill Olcott, Central Asia's New States: Independence, Foreign Policy and Regional Security, Washington, D.C, 1996, pp. 31-33

⁶⁶⁸ Akiner, 'The Contestation of Islam', p. 86

⁶⁶⁹ *ibid.* p. 87

played a large role in Wahhabi teaching in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. The education funding has almost entirely come from Saudi Arabian sources.⁶⁷⁰

Saudi Arabia was also eager to lead the way in the Islamic revival of the region out of fear that Iran may get involved. The Iranian clerics were aware that they could not export an Iranian styled revolution to Central Asia for a variety of reasons and exhibited caution in their relationship with Central Asia, even towards the ethnically Persian Tajiks.⁶⁷¹ Iran realised that building Shia Islam in a deeply Sovietized, predominantly Sunni region was almost impossible. In addition it was concerned not to antagonise Russia.

⁶⁷⁰ Olivier Roy, 'Present Patterns of Islamism in Central Asia', in Carter and Ehteshami (eds.), The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia, p.61

⁶⁷¹ Graham E. Fuller, 'The Impact of Central Asia on the Middle East', in David Menashri (ed.), Central Asia Meets the Middle East, London, Portland, OR, 1998, pp. 220-236

6.6 Conclusion

As shown in this chapter, Islam holds its power on Central Asia through its cultural and political influences. The strength and gradual growth of secular Islam is a sign of the importance of Islam on Central Asian society. Section 6.2 shows how secular Islam is becoming more prominent in Central Asia (to a lesser extent in Turkmenistan). This form of Islamic evolution is particularly striking for Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan, which do not have a strong historic Islamic culture. It shows how even the least Islamicised countries in the region are increasingly interacting with Islam and how symbols of religion are regularly seen and felt in everyday life. Secular Islam in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and southern Kyrgyzstan is more firmly consolidated. It plays a stronger role on people's identity and the ways they behave, dress etc. The real status of Islam in Turkmenistan, both secular and political, is harder to detect because of the severe restrictions on individual freedom.

As previously stated the secular Islamicisation of society can play a role in the development of more extreme Islam and an increased tolerance to political Islam, especially if political Islam does not necessarily mean the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. In addition, the regimes, and their way of governing has contributed to the escalation of a more extreme and politicised Islam as an alternative to the status quo. This has escalated the position of Islam and given it competing influences capable of leading Central Asian society and politics. This is particularly the case in Uzbekistan where secular Islam is strong and is coupled with a regime that encourages militancy through the treatment of its population. Islamic organisations have been the most active in Uzbekistan; consequently control of extremism and fundamentalism in this country could help limit the spread of extremism and fundamentalism in the region. The severe conditions in the Ferghana Valley and its history of being the core of Islamic activity means that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are also under strong Islamic influences. External Islamic influences should not be exaggerated, as they are not the main trigger for the increased Islamicisation of the region; however, the Taliban and Saudi Arabia have added to the strength of Islam in Central Asia.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Cooperation or Competition?

The objective of this thesis has been to determine whether Russian, Islamic or American influences have been the strongest since 1991. Central Asia, since the early years of its independence, has found itself once again host to different influences battling one another in order to prevail as the most powerful and determining force in the region. This thesis argues that the 'new great game' between Russian, Islamic and American influences in Central Asia evolved in the mid to late 1990's and not after the war on terror as commonly thought. Therefore, from the early years of independence, competition and not cooperation has been the underlying tendency amongst the competing powers. This thesis shows how the rivalry for influence in Central Asia was present long before the war on terror, which witnessed only a brief period of cooperation between the USA and Russia in order to defeat the common threat in Afghanistan. This was a brief time of agreement in an era characterised by competition.

The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in an array of speculations regarding which powers would become influential in the newly-independent 'Islamic' former Soviet Republics. By the mid-1990's, Russia and the USA had surfaced as potential players in Central Asia, and contrary to speculation neither Iran nor Turkey appeared to have had a strong influence over any of the Central Asian countries. Therefore, Islamic influences in this thesis mainly refer to domestic Islam, manifesting internally, although there are also some external Islamic influences affecting the region. Islam showed its force and the effects it could have on not only particular Central Asian countries but on the entire region throughout the Tajik civil war. The civil war in Tajikistan was one of the first indications that Islam could develop into a power capable of having a profound affect on the development of the region.

This thesis has identified these three powers as the main players in Central Asia for reasons discussed in the introduction and throughout the different chapters. 'Influence' as far as this work is concerned, relates to security, politics, economics and culture. In

order to assess which power is strongest in the region, it has been essential to look at how Russia, Islam and the USA have interacted in the security, political, economic and cultural spheres of each country and amongst different strata of the population. This is how this thesis measures competing influences. Therefore, this thesis has given a method by which to measure influences and a definition of what is meant by influences. This thesis not only compares two primarily external powers with an internal power but also shows how external powers can have internal effects. Therefore this thesis contributes in showing how Islam is an equal competitor to the two external powers in the 'new great game'.

As previously stated, this thesis does not regard China as a 'power' at the same level of competition as Russia, Islam and the USA. China is undisputably becoming more and more prominent in the Central Asian economic and energy fields, in addition to having a lot of influence over the SCO, which is growing in size and importance in the political, security and economic spheres. In spite of this, this thesis argues that China will limit its rivalry with Russia over Central Asia so long as the USA is a power with competing influences in the region. Both Russia and China prioritise marginalising and limiting American influences. So long as they have this in common they are less likely to look at one another as rivals. In addition, although Chinese economic influences are growing in the region, there still remains a lot of suspicion regarding Chinese political influences. The Central Asian leaders look at Russia as a buffer against Chinese political influences. The Central Asian population in general is also not accustomed to Chinese culture and language. What remains to be seen is whether any Central Asian country will look to China as a guarantee against increasing Russian influences, similar to how Uzbekistan looked to America until the Andijan incident.

7.2 Summary of Chapters

In order to justify the conclusion of which power has been the most prominent in the region since 1991, it is first essential to reiterate the separate conclusions of each chapter, which have resulted in the final assessment of which direction the Central Asian countries appear to have taken.

7.2.1 The Internal Politics of the Central Asian Countries

As this thesis is concerned with politics it was essential to start research with the internal political situation of each Central Asian country. Although this chapter is concerned with democratisation and why it failed, it starts by examining the effects of perestroika on Central Asia. From this early stage, when most of the other Soviet Republics and Eastern Europe were rejoicing from breaking away from the Russian sphere of influence, Central Asia was not. Russia had not only been responsible for creating the five Central Asian states, it had also conducted their political affairs. By the time of independence little was known of how to run different governmental infrastructures and foreign policy affairs. The lack of a strong national identity has been one of the reasons why democratisation failed in the region. In many ways, it appeared that the collapse of the USSR had created far more problems than the benefits independence brought with it.

This chapter discusses what is needed for the success of democratisation and gives reasons for its failure in all five countries. Political parties are discussed, as is their lack of focus and clear understanding of nationhood. This was a result of the creation of Central Asia by the Soviet Union and the lack of any previous experience of nation building. Many of the national and democratic movements that evolved after independence lacked direction and were unable to maintain popular support. There was no pressure from below for these movements to set up a clear national agenda as a result of the populations' lack of national consciousness. In addition, tribal and clan loyalties remained at times stronger than national sentiments.

The lack of nationalism not only affected the population and the success of political parties; it also had an impact on the elites. The elites did not want to democratize as this threatened to weaken their power base. All the Central Asian leaders are product of the Soviet Union and are surrounded by like-minded people. The growth of authoritarianism and the continuation of political systems based on the Soviet political model have increased Russian political influences in the region. All these factors have largely contributed to the failure of democratisation.

Thus this chapter looks at the efforts made towards democratisation and gives reasons for its ultimate failure. Although each country is distinctly different in the way it conducts foreign policy, in its national concerns, ethnic composition, economic potential, levels of Islamicisation and levels of democratisation, there still remain fundamental links that affect and encompass the entire region. Each country must be looked at separately in terms of how the different influences play out; it is also essential to remember that these influences interact from country to country and affect the region. This chapter introduces the internal political dynamics and internal structure of the Central Asian countries, which aids in the analysis of why certain influences are more successful in some countries than in others.

This chapter, therefore, draws attention to the dependence of the Central Asian countries on Russia before independence and their difficulties in adapting to the status quo after the collapse of the USSR. Their lack of interest in independence, and the fragility of their political systems have showed that there was no real alternative to the traditions left by the Soviet period. Independence came at the wrong time, with no distinct political figures or movements offering to lead the way.

7.2.2 Russian Influences in Central Asia

The different branches of Russian influences are analysed here. This chapter is the most complex and the longest as a result of the depth of Russian influences in Central Asia. In addition, Russia's role in the region is by far more researched than Islamic and American influences, although there still remain some research weaknesses. It is important to point out that Russia's cultural influence is the branch of Russian influences which is generally poorly researched. Not enough emphasis is placed on the

importance of Russification on Central Asian culture. Often when Russification is discussed it refers to linguistic Russification, which is usually not given the importance it deserves. Officially there are limits to the use of the Russian language, but unofficially Russian is not only the language used by most government representatives, between Central Asian countries but also between the Central Asians in one country; the levels of this vary considerable from country to country. The wide use of the Russian language is a strong indication of Russia's status in Central Asia. In this chapter, however, the main contribution to the importance of Russification is the attention given to behavioral Russification, which refers to the Russified identity of a large bulk of the Central Asian population. This will be discussed in more detail below.

The first section of this chapter covers the Russian Empire's involvement in the region. The most important point to remember during this period is that the Russian Empire was not seen as an invader, especially in areas such as in modern-day Kazakhstan. In other areas of modern day Central Asia, they met with little resistance; therefore, Russia's first contact with modern-day Central Asia was not associated with conquest, as in other areas incorporated into the Russian Empire. The USSR's incorporation of Central Asia not only saw the creation of five separate countries, but also symbolised an era of modernisation and education. The Russian and Soviet Empire's experience in Central Asia contributes to the long and common history between Russia and the Central Asian countries, characterised by more positive Russian contributions to the region than negative. This is a period of history which although thoroughly researched cannot go unmentioned as it provides an explanation to why Central Asia's relationship with Moscow differed to other regions also incorporated into the Russian and Soviet spheres.

The next section in this chapter refers to the core of what has made Russia the most wanted and prevailing influence over the region, and a challenge to all those that try to usurp its role. This section deals with both linguistic and behavioral Russification and makes distinctions between Sovietization and Russification. Central Asia has been profoundly influenced by Russian culture, mentality and general way of conduct. Limits on linguistic Russification have been attempted because linguistic Russification

can easily be identified. Behavioral Russification has often gone unnoticed, and has not previously been defined. This phenomenon has given both Central Asians and Russians a similar way of conduct, therefore a similar identity. Behavioral Russification is a profound contributor and asset to Russia remaining the most dominant power in Central Asia; it has affected all strata of the population, including those that are openly Muslim or Westernised.

Security also forms a pillar in Russian influences in Central Asia; it is an influence, which has faced strong competition from the USA, especially after September 11. Nevertheless, it appears that Russia has fought back to maintain its role as a prominent security provider. It is responsible for the creation of organisations such as the CST, which developed into the CSTO. Regardless of the actual efficiency of regional defence organisations and anti-terrorist centres led by Russia, they appear to offer a better alternative to the non-Russian ones, which have proved totally inefficient, such as Centrasbat. The SCO, which is headed by Russia and China, is officially aimed at fighting extremism, terrorism and separatism. It is not only responsible for providing security; it also promotes greater economic cooperation between member states. This organisation is gradually growing in prominence. The S5 was not formally created until 1997; in 2001 it underwent its first major evolution and became known as the SCO. Since America reinstated its role in Central Asia, following the events of September 11, the SCO has been increasingly seen as an alliance between Russia and China aimed, amongst other things, to limit the increasing American influences in the region. The SCO's tasks are becoming more and more multi-vectored, and it is becoming one of the most important and effective regional organisations.

Despite America's role in defeating the Taliban regime, which had become a serious security threat to Central Asian security and stability, Russia has remained active and central in Central Asian security. Although China is becoming more prominent in Central Asian affairs, it will not challenge Russia's role so long as the Americans remain a common threat. In addition, Russian and Central Asian security is more interlinked than that of American or Chinese security with Central Asia. The question of security in this chapter is not only related to Russia providing security to Central Asia, but also with the role Central Asia plays in the security of Russia. The main

question this section asks is why it has been so important for Russian security to remain influential in Central Asia? Keeping the region immune from extremism is one of Moscow's main priorities. This section, therefore, examines the links between Chechen and Central Asian extremists. The links found between these groups have made Central Asia essential for Russia's national and security interests. Russia's intervention in the Tajik civil war was an issue of Russian security as much as it was a solution to stabilise Tajikistan. Extremism in Central Asia is a threat to Russia and its population of around 20 million Muslims. This chapter also challenges the term international terrorism when referring to Central Asian groups, and gives reasons why this applies more to organisations such as Al-Qaida. Islamic extremist movements do not all speak through one voice. Chechen extremists and the IMU can coordinate their activities because they function in the same region- this could be called regional terrorism. It would be very difficult to find links between the IMU and extremist movements in the Middle East, each have their own political agenda and their own distinct objectives. Putin and Bush both use the term international terrorism to justify their policies, although Russia's war on terror appears to be more regional than global; this is an area that very much separates Russian objectives from American. They are each fighting extremism in their own way, and have different enemies in mind. This is very much characterised by their very different relationship with Iran.

The USA's increased military presence in Central Asia prompted Putin to act quickly to reinstate Russia's military involvement in the region. Russia felt threatened that American military presence was going to facilitate the USA's dominance of Central Asia. Russia's military deployment in Bishkek and Dushanbe were a direct response to K2 and Manas airbases. Putin was not going to allow the USA an advantage over Russia in any sphere related to Central Asia. As a result two parallel security branches have taken shape in Central Asia, each one trying to outdo the other. The Russian security presence is an indication that although Russia's role globally has been thwarted by the USA, Russia will not let this happen regionally. This has also helped Putin demonstrate to his people (and the world) that Russia remains a great power.

Russia's interest in Central Asia also derives from the existence of a large number of ethnic Russians in the Central Asian countries. Russia feels it has a duty to protect its

people in the former Soviet Republics. Critics of Russian foreign policy argue that this has given Russia an excuse to control the political orientations of countries with a large Russian population. The minorities card can be a useful tool for Russia to impose its influence over certain countries, especially in Kazakhstan, however this chapter has shown that Moscow's strong relationship with all the Central Asian countries in particular with Kazakhstan goes beyond the issue of the Russian minority.

Russia's political influence is very much interlinked with security issues, as seen with the minority's example. Central Asia's political systems (and Russia's to a lesser extent) increasingly resemble the Soviet political model; there is a rise in authoritarianism, and opposition parties are suffering severe government control. The Central Asian leaders are looking for support in Moscow, as they know Moscow will not challenge or criticise their internal policies, nor encourage any form of opposition. This notion has increased since the Ukrainian and the Kyrgyz revolutions. Political support from Russia is a guarantee of security at a time when too much American interference in the political sphere is seen as a threat encouraging regime change. This was clearly seen with Putin's support of Karimov during the Andijan incidents. Russia cannot be criticised for the lack of democratic values in Central Asia because it never declared that it was going to tackle such issues. Protection of human rights and the implementation of reform have always been an American characteristic, and although Putin cannot be given credit for the political milieu in Central Asia, he can neither be held responsible for it, as it has never been a Russian objective.

Russia's economic relationship with Central Asia, as its security and political relationship, is reciprocal. Both Russia and Central Asia have much to gain from regional economic organisations. The initial trigger for increased attention on regionalisation, especially in the political and economic spheres, came as a result of Moscow's disappointment with the support it was receiving from the west. Russia began to realise that its national interest lay in regionalisation. The political shift was seen in the early 1990's; the economic reorientation came later. Another reason for Russia's regional economic agenda came as a result of increased American presence in Central Asia. Putin's greatest achievement in economic regionalisation with Central Asia came with the invitation to join the CSCO in 2004. Russia, since joining the

CACO, which has now merged with the EurAsEC, has tried to broaden the scope of this primarily economic organisation by also introducing a political and defence agenda. The aim for doing so was to create a bigger challenge to US influences. This is yet another example of Russian perseverance not to allow any other country to take its role in the region. The CSTO focuses on keeping Russia dominant in defence and security matters, the SCO has multi-vectorised aims, primarily dealing with security but also with, economics and politics, and the CACO/EurAsEC aims to achieve Russian dominance through economic tactics, although it also overlaps with the objectives of the other two organisations. The end result is that Russia has created a web of influences, encompassing all the essential spheres that it could be challenged on by the USA. This is competition for influence through organisations. The creation of regional organisations has been a very effective way for Russia to remain pivotal in Central Asian affairs. It is also important to point out that these organisations are not only working for the advantage of Moscow but also for Central Asia. Any form of regionalism is a positive step for the Central Asians who need to work together to create an effective, political, security and economic system. This task has been the most successful with Russian participation, especially as Russia is also a regional country often suffering from similar problems.

7.2.3 American Influences in Central Asia

This chapter traces the evolution of America foreign policy towards Central Asia and the gradual infiltration of its influences on Central Asian governments and society. It shows how American interaction with the Central Asian countries, since independence, has been primarily characterised by competition with Russia and not cooperation. Prior to September 11, NATO's PFP, and organisations such as GUUAM were seen to challenge the security umbrella that Russia had tried to build over what it regarded as its own sphere of influence. Washington's wooing of the Karimov regime was seen as a method of gaining further access to the heart of Central Asia. Karimov was seen as America's key to future involvement in the region. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan caught the attention of the USA long before 2001 as a result of their energy wealth, while Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan remained relatively left out of Washington's agenda.

The events of September 11 changed the geo-strategic balance of the region. Washington's involvement intensified, as a web of influences was created challenging those of Russia. America had a new strategy in Central Asia; the war on terror enabled it to become politically, economically and culturally active in the region. In addition, US troops had bases on Central Asian soil, which further added to their network of influences. Russia's reaction to these developments and the growing role of Islam, which has intensified since 2001, have given birth to the 'new great game'.

America has undisputedly been the reason for the defeat of the Taliban regime, which was a threat to stability in the region. Along with the downfall of the Taliban, organisations such as the IMU have been weakened. American military interaction in Afghanistan and the existence of American bases ended the wave of incursions into Kyrgyzstan aimed at the Uzbek regime. This consequently reduced the IMU's Islamic threat that struck the region at the end of the last decade. Washington's tactics of accommodating the regime's authoritarianism, and repressive policies have caused a new wave of extremism. It has often been argued that Washington's political influences have been counterproductive, only adding to the rise of anger toward the regimes, anger that often takes an Islamic form. It is generally feared by the Central Asian leaders, especially by Karimov, that too much American interference in internal matters sows the seeds for a coloured revolution. Consequently the Central Asian leaders have become weary of allowing the USA too close to their power base.

Washington's economic influence, in terms of financial aid, investments and petro-politics is strength to its role in the region. No other country has the potential to provide assistance to the same extent as the USA. The Central Asian countries are in need of economic assistance and a way to divert their energy resources to the international markets. The USA can help them achieve this. Washington's cultural influence is weak, so far Russia's cultural influence followed by that of Islam are the main pillars of the Central Asian culture and identity. This does not mean that the temptations of globalisation and the American way of life will not evolve over time.

Washington's security influence has been prominent and positive in many respects; it showed to be the most effective at diluting the Islamic threat from regional Islamic organisations that struck the region at the end of the 1990's. Unfortunately American security has been interlinked with its political role. Providing security from Islamic extremism without causing a popular Islamic backlash or causing the regimes to fear a coloured revolution has been a great challenge for Washington. Its failure in this sphere has weakened both political and security-based influences. As stated above, America's economic influences are strong; Washington has used this advantage to strengthen its other influences. This was most clearly seen with Bakiyev's and Rahmonov's decision to allow American and coalition forces to remain in their countries, despite the SCO declaration for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the region.

7.2.4 The Energy Resource Dimension

This chapter is an extension to the economic influences on Central Asia from all three powers. Petro-politics contributes vastly to the levels of competition between the main players in Central Asia. The competition in this field is primarily between the USA and Russia; these two countries since the collapse of the USSR have been battling for greater control of this specific area of the economy. This chapter has shown that the Caspian littoral countries' untapped wealth has been one of the reasons that have brought Central Asia to the forefront of America's agenda in the region. The USA's need for greater supplies of natural resources has been portrayed by American oil companies' interest for the exploration and development of oil and gas fields, particularly in Kazakhstan. This is a process, which has been developing since the disintegration of the USSR and especially after the soaring of relations between the USA and Saudi Arabia after September 11. America's renewed political and security role in the region post September 11, have further increased the risk for Russia maintaining its energy monopoly of the region.

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are the pivotal countries in the resource war between Russia and America. Islam's role in this sphere is limited, as it is primarily an internal power unable to implement projects or construct pipelines. It does, however, have the power to affect the success of Russian and American pipelines by contributing to

instability in the countries that these pipelines pass through. This chapter shows how northbound pipelines, which are dominated by Russia, are the most numerous and effective. The westbound direction, which is mainly supported by the USA, has the potential of having an enormous impact on the geo-political and geo-economic balance of the region. The completion of the BTC pipeline has caused concern for Russia, as Washington appears to have been successful at creating a pipeline that not only excludes Russian companies, but also enables Kazakhstan to direct its energy flow away from Russian control. The success of this pipeline is a threat to Russia's dominant energy role in the region, especially as it offers alternative markets consequently reducing Russian dependency. This has been one of the greatest challenges to the tight network of export routes under Russian guidance. The southeast bound direction largely involves pipelines that are not sponsored by the USA or Russia, although the construction of the TAP could change this. Southeast bound pipelines primarily involve the participation of Islamic countries, especially Iran. Both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have plans and/or actual pipelines that carry their resources to the Islamic Republic. Although these links enhance the relationship between Central Asia (especially Turkmenistan) and Iran, they do not contribute to the strengthening of the Islamic influences in Central Asia, they merely challenge the USA wishes to isolate Iran. It is important to remember that the BTC, the CPC and other pipelines that symbolise American or Russian economic influence are also used as political tools to further enhance American or Russian participation in the region.

Whichever power can hold the reins on Kazakh and Turkmen energy flows is also in an advantageous position vis-à-vis other aspects of Kazakh and Turkmen affairs. Energy-related projects and pipeline construction in this relatively untouched part of the world are one of the main reasons why America and to a lesser extent Russia are so actively competing for influence in this region. Energy-related opportunities are vital for the economies of Central Asia, and the power that can offer the most amount of assistance will increase its overall influence over the region. This is most clearly seen with Niyazov's determination to start talks on the TAP with the USA; he was even willing to recognise the legitimacy of the Taliban in order for this pipeline to succeed. If the TAP develops into a real project, Niyazov would be able to diversify his energy flow away from Russia; this would strengthen the USA's relationship with Ashgabad,

consequently advancing America's position in the new great game. It is important to remember that although words between Ashgabad and Washington have been exchanged regarding the TAP, the reality still remains that the country's main energy deal, conducted by the Turkmenbashi, was with Putin in 2003. Even though Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are not directly involved in this resource war, success in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will affect Russian and American political and security related leverage into these countries. Therefore, the game of petro-politics is not only about winning over Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan; it also has far wider implications. Despite the competition Moscow is experiencing in this vital branch of the economy, that has historically been under its control, the region remains more involved and dependent on Russian energy deals and Russian sponsored pipeline projects than American.

7.2.5 Islamic Influences and Central Asia

This chapter researches the impact and importance of secular and political Islam in Central Asia, and its strength to grip the region and navigate it down an Islamic path. Again each country is analysed separately, as Islamicisation has had different affects on each country. The origins of Islam are traced in order to highlight its importance throughout the history of Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan where it formed a core section of their identity. The impact of Islam is then briefly analysed throughout the eras of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

The following two sections look at cultural Islam and state-sponsored Islam. The first of these two sections looks specifically at Islam as a domestic religion and cultural phenomenon; it is concerned with secular Islamic influences on the different nationalities and the role this has on culture. It traces the rise of secular Islam even in the least Islamicised countries, such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The following section examines politically approved Islam in each of the five countries.

This chapter also attempts to give reasons why Islamic extremism has been on an increase since independence. Islamic extremism is a very difficult concept to analyse as it results from many factors. What this chapter makes clear is that the main causes of extremism, in Central Asia, are internal. Islamic influences coming from

Afghanistan and the Middle East are also covered. Although poverty, oppression and social derangements cannot be the sole causes of extremism they are a lethal fuel for it. Islam has the ability to portray itself as the answer, the saviour of people that need mobilising means to show their misery and anger at the main bodies of authority.

Islamic organisations are the political tools in which Islamic extremism gives an alternative to the population from the status quo. The Islamic influence on political conduct gives rise to political Islam, which is a mounting influence and a threat to all the governments of Central Asia. Political Islam knows no borders, and can influence the oppressed people of the least Islamic Central Asian countries. The region is very vulnerable in this respect; Islamicisation in one country could have a destabilising affect on all the rest. In addition the rise of Islamic movements and political Islam does not necessarily mean the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. Islam can play a role in politics, while still holding onto some secular characteristics. This makes the rise of Islamic parties even more threatening to the Central Asian regimes, as their support base could be large. The most prominent Islamic group after the war in Afghanistan became HT, which has cells in all of the Central Asian countries. HT does not only offer an alternative political agenda, but has also become increasingly popular with the population as a result of its peaceful and persuasive methods at winning support; it also offers a welfare programme. In other words it plays a social role in the lives of those that are under its guidance.

7.3 Which Power has the strongest Competing Influences and Why?

As seen throughout this thesis, Russia, in spite of increasing challenges from the other two powers, has remained the strongest power. Linguistic and particularly behavioural Russification appear to be deeply rooted in the Central Asian identity and make Russia's cultural influence very strong. The growth of secular Islam is the greatest challenge to Russia's cultural influence, especially as it appears to be gradually rising. Although Russia has strongly tried to maintain an economic presence through organisations such as the CACO/EurAsEC, what has aided with its economic influence in the region is its political influence on the Central Asian regimes. For example, Karimov facilitated Russia's participation in the CACO as a way of guaranteeing Russian political support at a time when Washington looked to be challenging his internal politics. This is an example of how competing influences can be interlinked. Although America economically is the strongest power, and can offer more economic assistance to the Central Asian countries than Russia, the Central Asian leaders fear that this may encourage Washington to expand its other influences, particularly its political influence. Russia has maintained its dominance over the region's energy resources and export routes, although the USA's prominence in this sphere is slowly increasing. Politically, Russia is seen as the most favourable power to interact in the region's internal affairs. The fear of political Islam looms over a large bulk of the population and particularly for the secular regimes. The growth of secular Islam, the rising prominence of organisations such as HT, the continued authoritarianism of the elites and American support of the leaders (as was the case with Karimov before Andijan) has encouraged the rise of political Islam. This has further pushed the Central Asian leaders towards Russian political support. Growing authoritarianism and an increased threat of 'coloured revolutions' has also further aligned the Soviet-bred elites to look to Russia out of fear that American political influence will weaken their power-base. Russia's security-related influence is strongly challenged by Washington; organisations such as the SCO and CSTO help strengthen Russia's security role. Although the security of the region from the escalation of Islamic extremism is an issue that affects both Russia and the Central Asian countries, it was Washington that

reduced the risk of the Talibanisation of Central Asia. American security assistance has been essential to the region and has challenged Islamic extremism. Although Washington's military presence in the region reduces the chances of the Taliban regrouping and thus weakens the strength of some Central Asian Islamic organisations, it also allows the USA to interfere in the internal politics of the country it is based in. This inevitably means increased economic assistance for the host country but also exposes the regime to criticism and helps fuel Islamic sentiments, which the regimes fear. Thus Russia's political, cultural, economic and security-related influences enable it to remain the most effective and strongest power in the region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

INTERVIEWS

Aliev, Alexander, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, London, June 2004

Beshimov, Bakyt, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, American University-Central Asia, Bishkek, November 2005

Beybutova, Iris, Dean, Professor at the School of International Relations, Kyrgyz State National University, Bishkek, September 2004 and November 2005

Buzurtanova, Marek, Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, November 2005

Chin, Sidlana, Vice Rector, Kazakh-American University, Almaty, 2005

Hijazy, Mahmud Fahmi, Dean, The Egyptian-Kazakh University for Islamic Culture, Almaty, November 2005

Khajiyev, Ibragim Imatovich, Assistant Rector, Kazakh-American University, Almaty, November 2005

Kablukov, Yevgenni, Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister, September 2004 and Political Advisor to Bakiyev, November 2005, Bishkek

Karimov, Jamshid Farrukhovich, Head of International Relations Department, Tashkent Islamic University, Member of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, September 2004

Khusnidinov, Zukhriddin M., Rector, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor, Tashkent Islamic University, Member of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, September 2004

Kusaienova, Gulnara, Head of International Relations Department, Kazakh-American University, Almaty, November 2005

Narymbetova, Karina, PhD Candidate and English Teacher, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, November 2005

Paramonov Vladimir V., Leading Research Fellow, Centre for Economic Research, Tashkent, September 2004

Sabirdina, Maya, Counsellor, Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic, London, June 2004

Tungatarova, Lyazzat, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, November 2005

Xiuhua, Zhou, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Syrian Arab Republic, Damascus, September 2005

Zalepo, Vladimir Mikhailovich, Rector, Kazakh-American University, Almaty, November 2005

I had informal interviews/discussions with some students from the Kyrgyz State National University in November 2005, who participated in the Tulip revolution. I was also able to meet members of Kel Kel, a civil youth movement created during the Tulip revolution. Members of this movement had originally been in favour of the Bakiyev regime, which they had hoped would bring change to Kyrgyzstan. Disappointed with the lack of reform they had turned against the government and were therefore insistent that their names not be mentioned in this thesis. I spoke to young boys (students) at the Kukeldash Madrassas and one of the Imams at the school in Tashkent, in addition to an Imam at the Namazgokn mosque in September 2005 also in

Tashkent. I also had informal discussions with American soldiers based at Manas, K2 and Afghanistan, in addition to American civil servants working on democracy promoting projects in Kyrgyzstan; these individuals did not want to be named.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Documents, Speeches and Memoirs

Akayev, Askar, 'Kyrgyzstan: Russian Base at Kant seen as Counterweight to Manas NATO Base', Eurasianet.org,

<http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kyrgyzstan/hypermail/200309/0036.shtml>

Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

<http://www.kazakhstanembassy.org.uk/cgi-bin/index/225>

Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Legal_co-operation/Foreigners_and_citizens/Nationality/Documents/National_legislation/Kyrgyzstan%20Constitution%20of%20the%20Kyrgyz%20Republic.asp

Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan,

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/untc/unpan003670.htm>

Constitution of the Republic of Turkmenistan,

<http://www.uta.edu/cpsees/TURKCON.htm>

Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan,

<http://www.uta.edu/cpsees/UZBEKCON.htm>

El'tsin, Boris, Address of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly on the Consolidation of the Russian State (Domestic and Foreign Policy Guidelines), London, 1994

Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000,

<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>

Gorbachev, Mikhail S., 'Foreword' in Valery Tishkov (ed.), Chechnya: Life in a War-

Torn Society, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2004

Ivanov, Igor S., The New Russian Diplomacy, Washington D.C, 2002

Ivanov, Igor S., 'With Eyes on the US, Russia Bolsters Central Asian Presence',
Eurasianet.org,

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav062204a.shtml>

The Koran, 96:1-5

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Freedom of Worship and Religious
Organisations (New Version), 1998,

<http://www.stetson.edu/~psteeves/relnews/uzbeklaw.html>

Niyazov, Saparmurad, Rukhnama: Reflections on the Spiritual Values of the Turkmen,
Ashgabad, 2005

Powell, Colin, 'U.S Embassy Welcomes Ambassador Laura E. Kennedy to
Turkmenistan', United States Mission in Turkmenistan, October 2001,

<http://www.usemb-ashgabat.usia.co.at/archive/newsletter5.html>

Putin, Vladimir, First Person, London, 2000

Tokaev, K. K, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, discussing
'Kazakhstan in the Context of the Geo-Politics of the Caspian' at the International
Institute of Strategic Studies, London, 9.3.06

Websites

American University-Central Asia, <http://www.auca.kg/about/history>

Caspian Pipeline Consortium, <http://www.cpc.ru/portal/alias!press/lang!en-US/tabID!3344/DesktopDefault.aspx>

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: United States Helsinki Commission, http://www.csce.gov/press_csce.cfm?press_id=334

Council on Foreign Relations, <http://www.cfr.org/>

GUUAM, 1996-2000, <http://www.guam.org/>

Hizb-ut Tahrir official website, <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/english>

Kazakh-American University, <http://www.itte.kz/client/KAU>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation: Information and Press Department, http://www.1n.mid.ru/brp_4

Political Party of Kyrgyzstan Ar-Namys, http://www.ar-namys.org/en/view_temp.php?=140

Popular Movement Birlik Party, <http://www.birlik.net/page-4.uk>

Turkmenistan Embassy Press Release,
<http://www.turkmenistanembassy.org/turkmen/news/pressrelease.html>

United States Department of Defense, <http://www.defenselink.mil/sites/>

United States Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/>

SECONDARY SOURCES

The page ranges for articles used from the journal Central Asia and the Caucasus have not been included as the British Library has lost/misplaced these journals.

Adams, Jan S., 'The US-Russian Face-Off in the Caspian Basin', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 47, no. 1, January/February 2000, pp. 49-58

Ahrari, Ehsan, 'The Strategic Future of Central Asia: A View from Washington', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 157-166

Akbarzadeh, Shahram, Uzbekistan and the United States: Authoritarianism, Islamism and Washington's Security Agenda, London, New York, 2005

Akiner Shirin, 'Post-Soviet Central Asia', in Peter Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia and its Neighbours, London, 1994, pp. 4-35

Akimbekov, Sultan, 'The Conflict in Afghanistan: Conditions, Problems, and Prospects', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia: A Gathering Storm, Armonk, NY, 2002, pp. 69-113

Akiner, Shirin, 'Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks' in Graham Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States, London, New York, 1996, pp. 334-347

Akiner, Shirin, 'Politics of Energy in the Caspian Sea', Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asian 2002, second edition, London, 2001, pp. 11-17

Akiner, Shirin, 'The Contestation of Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia', in Hannah Carter and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia, London, New York, 2004, pp. 86-133

Alexandrov, Mikhail, Uneasy Alliance: Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992-1997, Westport, Connecticut, London, 1999

Allison, Roy, 'The Military and Political Security Landscape in Russia and the South', in Rajan Menon, Yuri E. Fedorov, and Ghia Nodia (eds.), Russia, the Caucasus and Central Asia: The 21st Century Security Environment, Armonk, NY, London, 1999, pp. 27-60

Allison, Roy, 'Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security in Central Asia', International Affairs, vol.80, no.3, May 2004, pp. 463-483

Allison, Roy and Jonson, Lena 'Central Asian Security: Internal and External Dynamics' in Allison and Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context, Washington, D.C, 2001, pp. 1-23

Allison, Roy, 'Strategic Reassertion in Russia's Central Asia Policy', International Affairs, vol.80, no.2, March 2004, pp. 277-293

Amineh, Mehdi Parvizi, Towards the Control of the Oil Resources in the Caspian Region, New York, 1999

Anderson, John The International Politics of Central Asia, New York, 1997

Anderson, John, 'Creating a Framework for Civil Society in Kyrgyzstan', Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 52, no. 1, 2000, pp. 77-93

Anderson, John, Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy, Amsterdam, 1999

Anderson, Liam and Beck, Michael, 'U.S. Political Activism in Central Asia: The Case of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan', in Gary K. Bertsch, Cassady Craft, Scott A. Jones and Michael Beck (eds.), Crossroads and Conflict: Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia, New York, London, 2000, pp. 75-89

Aron, Raymond, Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1972

Aslund, Anders, 'Sizing Up the Central Asian Economies', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 5, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 75-87

Atkin, Muriel, 'Religious, National, and other Identities in Central Asia', in Jo-Ann Gross (ed.), Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change, Durham, London, 1992, pp. 46-72

Aydin, Mustafa, 'Oil, Pipelines and Security: The Geo-Politics of the Caspian Region', in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-Emerging Region, London, New York, 2004, pp. 3-31

Ayoob, Mohammed, 'The Future of Political Islam: the Importance of External Variables', International Affairs, vol. 81, no. 5, October 2005, pp. 951-961

Babadzhanov, Bakhtiar, 'Islam in Uzbekistan: From the Struggle for "Religious Purity" to Political Activism', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia: A Gathering Storm, Armonk, NY, 2002, pp. 299-330

Babak, Vladimir, 'The Formation of Political Parties and Movements in Central Asia' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2001, pp. 143-164

Bacon, Elizabeth E., Central Asia Under Russian Rule: A Study in Cultural Change, Ithaca, NY, 1966

Bahgat, Gawdat, 'Managing Dependence: American-Saudi Oil Relations', Arab Studies Quarterly, vol. 23, no. 1, winter 2001, pp. 1-14

Bajarunas, Eitvydas, 'Putin's Russia: Whither Multi-Polarity', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, March 2002

Becker, Seymour, 'The Russian Conquest of Central Asia and Kazakhstan: Motives, Methods, Consequences', in Hafeez Malik (ed.), Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London, 1994, pp. 21-38

Belokrenitsky, Vyacheslav, 'Islamic Radicalism in Central Asia: The Influence of Pakistan and Afghanistan', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia at the End of the Transition, New York, 2005, pp. 152-191

Bennigsen, Alexander and Lemercier-Quelquejay, Chantal, Islam in the Soviet Union, London, 1967

Bingol, Yilmaz, 'Nationalism and Democracy in Post-Communist Central Asia', Asian Ethnicity, vol.5, no.1, February 2004, pp. 43-60

Bissenova, Alima, 'Central Asian Encounters in the Middle East: Nationalism, Islam and Post-Coloniality in Al-Azhar', Religion, State & Society, vol. 33, no. 3, September 2005, pp. 253-262

Blandy, C W, 'The Caspian: Commnatory Crosscurrents', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, January 1999

Blank, Stephan, 'The United States and Central Asia', in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context, Washington, D.C, 2001, pp. 127-151

Blank, Stephen, 'Soviet Re-conquest of Central Asia', in Hafeez Malik (ed.), Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London, 1994, pp. 39-64

Blank, Stephen, 'The Future of the Caspian Security', Problems of Post-Communism, vol.50, no. 1 January/February 2003, pp. 8-21

Blitstein, Peter A., 'Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian Schools, 1938-1953', in Ronald Grigor Suny & Terry Martin (eds.), A State of Nations: Empire and Nation Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin, New York, 2001, pp. 253-274

Bohr, Annette, Uzbekistan: Politics and Foreign Policy, London, 1998

Bohr, Annette, 'Turkmenistan and the Turkmen' in Graham Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States, London, New York, 1996, pp. 348-366

Bohr, Annette, 'Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order', International Affairs, vol.80, no.3, May 2004, pp. 485-502

Bondarevsky, Grigory and Ferdinand, Peter, 'Russian Foreign Policy and Central Asia' in Peter Ferdinand, The New Central Asia and its Neighbours, London, 1994, pp. 36-54

Bowker, Mike, Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War, Aldershot, Hants, Brookfield, 1997

Brown, Archie, The Gorbachev Factor, Oxford, 1997

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geo-Strategic Imperatives, New York, 1997

Bukkvoll, Tor, 'Arming the Ayatollahs: Economic Lobbies in Russia's Iran Policy, Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 49, no. 6, November-December 2002, pp. 29-41

Carlisle, Donald S., 'Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev', in William Fierman (ed.), Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation, Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, 1991, pp. 93-130

Collins, Kathleen, 'Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia', Journal of Democracy, vol. 13, no. 3, July 2002, pp. 137-152

Colton, Timothy J. and McFaul, Michael, 'Putin and Democratisation', in Dale R. Herspring (ed.), Putin's Russia, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 2003, pp. 13-38

Commercio, Michele E., 'Exiles in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan', Problems of Post-Communism, vol.51, no.6, November/December 2004, pp. 23-32

Cornell, Svante E., 'Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan', Terrorism and Political Violence, vol. 17, no. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 632-633

Cox, Michael, 'American Power Before and after September: Dizzy with Success?', International Affairs, vol. 78, no. 2, April 2002, pp. 261-276

Cummings, Sally N., Kazakhstan: Power and the Elites, London, New York, 2005

Cummings, Sally, N., 'Negotiating the Central Asian Presence: The Central Asian States', in Mary Buckley and Rick Fawn (eds.), Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11, Afghanistan and Beyond, London, 2003, pp. 239-251

Curtis, William Eleroy, Turkestan: The Heart of Asia, London, 1911

Dahl, Robert A., Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition, New Haven, London, 1971

Dahl, Robert A., A Preface to Democratic Theory, Chicago, London, 1956

Dalton, Russell J., Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies, Oxford, New York, 2004

Dave, Bhavna, 'Kazakhstan's 2004 Parliamentary Elections: Managing Loyalty and Support for the Regime', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 52, no. 1, January/February 2005, p. 3-14

Dawisha, Karen and Parrott, Bruce, Russia and the New States of Eurasia: The Politics of Upheaval, Cambridge, 1994

D'Encausse, Helene Carrere, 'Systematic Conquest, 1865 to 1884', in Edward Allworth (ed.), Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule, New York, London, 1967, pp. 131-150

Denoeux, Guilain, 'The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam', Middle East Policy, vol. 9, no. 2, June 2002, pp. 56-81

De Tocqueville, Alexis, Democracy in America, London, New York, 2003

Dudarev, K.P., 'A Post-Communist Authoritarian Regime' in Alexei Vassiliev (ed.), Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenges in the Post-Soviet Era, London, 2001, pp.131-155

Ferdinand, Peter 'The New Central Asia and China', in Peter Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia and its Neighbours, London, 1994, pp. 95-107

Fish, Steven M., 'Conclusion: Democracy and Russian Politics', in Zoltan Barany and Robert G. Moser (eds.), Russian Politics, Cambridge, 2001, pp. 215-251

Foot, Rosemary, Human Rights and Counter-terrorism in America's Asia Policy, Oxford, New York, 2004

Frager, Berg G., 'Soviet Nationalism: An Ideological Legacy to the Independent Republics of Central Asia', in Willem Van Schendel and Erik J. Zürcher (eds.), Identity Politics in Central Asia and the Muslim World, London, New York, 2001, pp. 13-33

Fuller, Graham E., 'Russia and Central Asia: Federation or Fault line?', in Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, New York, 1994, pp. 94-129

Fuller, Graham E., 'The Impact of Central Asia on the Middle East', in David Menashri (ed.), Central Asia Meets the Middle East, London, Portland, OR, 1998, pp. 220-236

Gareyev, Makhmud A., 'Russia and the Islamic Factor: Possible Sources of Military Conflicts and their Prevention', in Hafeez Malik (ed.), Russian-American Relations: Islamic and Turkic Dimensions in the Volga-Ural Basin, Houndmills, London, 2000, pp. 139-154

Gleason, Gregory, The Central Asian States, Discovering Independence, Boulder, Colorado, Oxford, 1997

Gleason, Gregory, 'The Politics of Counterinsurgency in Central Asia', Problems of Post-Communism, vol.49, no.2, Armonk, March/April 2002, pp. 3-14

Glenn, John, The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, 2003

Gofurov, O. and Abdullakhanov, R., 'Integration or Economic Nationalism?', Contemporary Central Asia, vol.5, no.2, August 2001, pp. 17-21

Green, David Jay, 'Regional Cooperation Policies in Central Asia', Journal of International Development, vol.13, no. 8 Chichester, NY, Weinheim, Brisbane, Singapore, Toronto, November 2001, pp. 1151-1164

Gunaratna, Rohan, 'Al-Qaeda', in Mary Buckley and Rick Fawn (eds.), Global Responses to Terrorism: 9/11, Afghanistan and Beyond, New York, London, 2003, pp. 37-51

Gunning, Jeroen, 'Peace with Hamas? The Transforming Potential of Political Participation', International Affairs, vol.80, no.2, March 2004, pp. 233-255

Guseynov, Rauf, 'Russian Energy Companies in Central Asia', Central Asian and the Caucasus, no. 5(29), 2004

Haghayeghi, Mehrdad, Islam and Politics in Central Asia, New York, 1996

Haghayeghi, Mehrdad, 'The Coming of Conflict to the Caspian Sea', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 50, no. 3, May/June 2003, pp. 32-41

Hale, Henry E. and Taagepera, Rein, 'Russia: Consolidation or Collapse?', Europe-Asia Studies, vol.54, no.7, 2002, pp. 1101-1125

Halliday, Fred, Two Hours that Shook the World: September 11, 2001: Causes and Consequences, London, 2002

Haugen, Arne The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia, Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2003

Herzig, Edmund, Iran and the Former Soviet South, London, 1995

Herzig, Edmund, 'Islam, Trans-nationalism, and Sub-regionalism in the CIS' in Renata Dwan and Oleksande Pavliuk (eds.), Building Security in the New States of Eurasia, Armonk, NY, London, 2000, pp. 227-257

Herzig, Edmund, 'Armenia and the Armenians', in Graham Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States, London, New York, 1996, pp. 248-264

Hill, Christopher, The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, 2003

Hostler, Charles Warren, Turkism and the Soviets, London, 1957

Hu, Richard W. X, 'China's Central Asia Policy: Making Sense of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia at the End of Transition, New York, 2005, pp. 130-151

Hu, Richard W. X, 'China and Central Asia: The Role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation', in Boris Rumer and Lau Sim Yee (eds.), Central Asia and South Caucasus Affairs, Tokyo, 2003, pp. 51-75

Hunter, Shireen T., Islam in Russia: The Politics of Identity and Security, Armonk, NY, London, 2004

Huntington, Samuel, The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century, London, 1991

Huntington, Samuel P., The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, London, New York, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto, Singapore, 1998

Huskey, Eugene, 'An Economy of Authoritarianism? Askar Akaev and Presidential Leadership in Kyrgyzstan', in Sally N. Cummings (ed.), Power and Change in Central Asia, London, New York, 2002, pp. 74-96

Hyman, Anthony 'Central Asia's Relations with Afghanistan and South Asia' in Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia and its Neighbours, London, 1994, pp. 75-94

Hyman, Anthony, 'Russians and Minorities in Central Asia', in Roy Allison (ed.), Challenges for the Former Soviet South, Washington, D.C, 1996, pp. 51-57

Hyman, Anthony, 'Russia, Central Asia and the Taliban', in William Maley (ed.), Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban, London, 2001, pp. 104-116

Iwashita, Akihiro, 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its Implications for Eurasian Security: A New Dimension of Partnership After the Post-Cold War Period', in Shinichiro Tabata and Akihiro Iwashita (eds.), Slavic Eurasia's Integration into the World Economy and Community-Slavic Eurasian Studies 2, Tokyo, 2004, pp. 259-281

Jonson, Lena 'Russia and Central Asia', in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context, Washington, D.C, 2001, pp. 95-126

Jonson, Lena, Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy, London, New York, 2004

Kangas, Roger D., 'State Building and Civil Society in Central Asia', in Vladimir Tismaneanu (ed.), Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia, Armonk, London, 1995, pp. 271-291

Karagiannis, Emmanuel, 'Political Islam in Uzbekistan: Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami', Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, no. 2, March 2006, pp. 261-280

Karin, Erlan, 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and its Implementations for Central Asia', in Shinichiro Tabata and Akihiro Iwashita (eds.), Slavic Eurasia's Integration into the World Economy and Community-Slavic Eurasian Studies 2, Tokyo, 2004, pp. 315-326

Kasenov, Oumirserik, 'Central Asia: National, Regional and Global Aspects of Security' in Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth (eds.), Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia, London, 1998, pp. 188-205

Kaser, Michael and Mehrotra, Santosh, 'Natural Resources and their Exploitation', in Roy Allison (ed.), Challenges from the Former Soviet South, Washington, DC, 1996, pp. 217-306

Kaser, Michael, The Economies of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, London, 1997

Kaushik, Devendra, 'Regional Cooperation: The Central Asian Experience', Contemporary Central Asia, vol.4, no. 1-2, New Delhi, Kolkata, April-August 2000

Khanin, Vladimir, 'Clientelism, Corruption, and Struggle for Power in Central Asia: The Case of Kyrgyzstan', in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-emerging Region, London, New York, 2004, pp. 181-202

Khodarkovsky, Michael, The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600-1771, Ithaca, London, 1992

Kionka, Riina and Vetik, Raivo, 'Estonia and the Estonians', in Graham Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States, London, New York, 1996, pp. 129-146

Kleveman, Lutz, The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia, London, 2003

Kolsto, Pal 'The Price of Stability: Kazakhstani Control Mechanisms under Conditions of Cultural and Demographic Bipolarity', in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2004, pp. 165-185

Kulchick, Yuriy, Fadin, Andrey and Sergeev, Victor, Central Asia after the Empire, London, Chicago, IL, 1996

'Kyrgyzstan', Jane's Sentinel: Russia and the CIS, Coulsdon, Surrey, 1996, section 6.7.4

Lahoud, Nelly, Political Thought in Islam: A Study in Intellectual Boundaries, London, New York, 2005

Lakoff, Sanford, 'The Reality of Muslim Exceptionalism', Journal of Democracy, vol. 15, no. 4, October 2004, pp. 133-139

Lapidot-Firilla, Anat, 'Dancing with Wolves: Turco-Iranian Relations in Perspective', in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-emerging Region, London, New York, 2004, pp. 104-118

Larijani, Mohammad Javad, 'Iran's Foreign Policy: Principles and Objectives', The Iranian Journal of International Affairs, vol.8, no.4, Tehran, winter 1996, pp. 754-763

Laumulin, Murat T., 'The Contemporary Geopolitical Situation in Central Asia: The Perspective from Kazakhstan', Central Asia and South Caucasus Affairs, Tokyo, 2002, pp. 11-38

Laumulin, Murat T., Central Asia and the West: The Geopolitical Impact on Regional Security, Almaty, 2004

Legvold, Robert, 'Great Power Stakes in Central Asia', in Robert Legvold (ed.), Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus, Cambridge, MA, London, 2003, pp. 1-38

Levitin, Leonid, 'Liberalisation in Kyrgyzstan: An Island of Democracy' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2001, pp. 187-213

Lieven, Anatol, 'The Secret Policemen's Ball: the United States, Russia and the International Order After 11 September', International Affairs, vol.78, no.2, 2002, pp. 245-259

Linz, Juan J. and Stepan, Alfred, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe, Baltimore, London, 1996

Lipman, Masha and McFaul, Michael, 'Putin and the Media', in Dale R. Herspring (ed.), Putin's Russia, Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford, 2003, pp. 63-84

Lipset, S.M, Political Man, London, 1963

Lo, Bobo, Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy, London, 2003

Lubin, Nancy, 'Central Asia: Issues and Challenges for United States Policy' in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (eds.), The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and its Borderlands, London, New York, 1994, pp. 261-272

Luong, Pauline Jones and Weinthal, Erika, 'New Friends, New Fears in Central Asia', Foreign Affairs, vol.81, no. 2, March/April 2002, pp. 61-70

MacFadyen, David, Russian Culture in Uzbekistan: One Language in the Middle of Nowhere, London, New York, 2006

Macfarlane, S. Neil, 'The United States and Regionalism in Central Asia', International Affairs, vol. 80, no. 3, May 2004, pp. 447-461

Magnus, Ralph H. and Naby, Eden, Afghanistan: Mullah, Marx, and Mujahid, Boulder, Colorado, Oxford, 2002

Malashenko, Alexei and Polonskaia, Ludmila, Islam in Central Asia, Reading, 1994

Malashenko, Alexei 'Islam in Central Asia' in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context, Washington, D.C, 2001, pp. 49-68

Marsden, Peter, The Taliban: War and Religion in Afghanistan, Cape Town, Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, 2002

Matiichik, Iaroslav, 'GUUAM: Its Current State, Risks, and Prospects', Central Asia and the Caucasus, no. 5(29), 2004

Maynes, Charles William, 'America Discovers Central Asia', Foreign Affairs, vol. 82, no. 2, April/March 2003, pp.120-132

McCauley, Martin, Afghanistan and Central Asia: A Modern History, London, New York, 2002

Mehrotra, O.N., Taliban and the Afghan Turmoil: The Role of the USA, Iran and China, New Delhi, 1997

Melvin, Neil J., Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road, London, 2000

Melvin, Neil J., 'The Russians: Diaspora and the End of Empire', in Charles King and Neil J. Melvin (eds.), Nations Abroad: Diaspora Politics and International relations in the Former Soviet Union, Boulder, Oxford, 1998, pp. 27-57

Menashri, David, 'Iran and Central Asia: Radical Regimes, Pragmatic Politics', in David Menashri (ed.), Central Asia Meets the Middle East, London, Portland, OR, 1998, pp. 73-97

Menon, Rajan, 'The New Great Game in Central Asia', Survival, vol.45, no. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 187-204

Merry, E. Wayne, 'Moscow's Retreat and Beijing's Rise as Regional Great Power', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 50, no. 3, Armonk, May/June 2003, pp. 17-31

Mesamed, Vladimir, 'Linguistic Policy and the Process of Democratisation on Uzbekistan' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2004, pp. 233-244

Moore, Barrington, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, Middlesex, New York, 1966

Munavvarov, Zahid I., 'Uzbekistan', in Mohiaddin Mesbahi (ed.), Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union, Gainesville, FL, 1994, pp. 133-148

Muzaparova, Leila, 'Economic Integration in Central Asia: Problems and Prospects', Contemporary Central Asia, New Delhi, vol.5, no.2, August 2001, pp. 26-34

Naumkin, Vitaly V., 'Russian Policy Towards Kazakhstan', in Robert Legvold (ed.), Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2003, pp. 39-65

Nichol, Jim, 'Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for US Interests', Current Politics and Economics of Russia, Eastern and Central Europe, vol.18, no.5, New York, 2003, pp. 411-428

Niyazi, Aziz, 'Tajikistan', in Mohiaddin Mesbahi (ed.), Central Asia and the Caucasus after the Soviet Union, Gainesville, FL, 1994, pp. 164-190

Nojumi, Neamatollah, The Rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan: Mass Mobilisation, Civil War, and the Future of the Region, New York, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2002

Nye, Joseph S., 'The American National Interest and Global Public Goods', International Affairs, vol. 78, no 2, April 2002, pp. 233-244

Olcott, Martha Brill, 'Central Asia: Common Legacies and Conflicts' in Roy Allison and Lena Jonson (eds.), Central Asian Security: The New International Context, Washington, D.C, 2001, pp. 24-48

Olcott, Martha Brill, Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise, Washington, D.C, 2002

Olcott, Martha Brill, The Kazakhs, Stanford, 1997

Olcott, Martha Brill, Central Asia's Second Chance, Washington, D.C, 2005

Olcott, Martha Brill, 'Ceremony of Substance: The Illusion of Unity in Central Asia' in Michael Mandelbaum (ed.), Central Asia and the World: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, New York, 1994, pp.17-46

Olimova, Saodat, 'Islam and the Tajik Conflict', in Roald Sagdeev and Susan Eisenhower (eds.), Islam and Central Asia, Washington, D.C, 2000

Olimova, Saodat, 'Opposition in Tajikistan: Pro et Contra' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2001, pp. 245-263

Olimov, Mouzaffar, 'The Policy of Russia in Central Asia: A Perspective from Tajikistan', in Gennady Chufrin (ed.), Russia and Central Asia: The Emerging Security Agenda, Oxford, New York, 1999, pp. 110-122

O'Loughlin, John, Tuathail, Gearoid and Kolossov, Vladimir, 'A Risky Westward Turn? Putin's 9-11 Script and Ordinary Russians', Europe-Asian Studies, vol.56, no.1, Jan 2004, pp. 3-34

Paramonov, Vladimir and Stokov, Aleksey, 'New Russia's Strategic Choice: Regionalisation versus Globalisation', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, May 2004

Payne, John, 'Tajikistan and the Tajiks', in Graham Smith (ed.), The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States, London, New York, 1996, pp. 367-384

Peimani, Hooman, The Caspian Pipeline Dilemma: Political Games and Economic Losses, Westport, Connecticut, London, 2001

Peterson, J.E, Saudi Arabia and the Illusion of Security, London, New York, 2002

Petro, Nicolai N., and Rubinstein, Alvin Z., Russian Foreign Policy: From Empire to Nation-State, New York, Harlow, 1997

Petrov, N.I., 'Political Stability in the Conditions of the Command-Administrative Regime' in Alexei Vassiliev (ed.), Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenges in the Post-Soviet Era, London, 2001, pp. 79-99

Pikulina, Marina, 'Uzbekistan in the Mirror of Military Security: A Historical Preface to Current Events', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, November 1999

Polat, Abdummanob, 'Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?' in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.), Civil Society in Central Asia, Seattle, London, 1999, pp. 135-157

Pomfret, Richard, 'Aid and Ideas: The Impact of Western Economic Support on Muslim Successor States' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2001, pp. 77-99

Przeworski, Adam, 'Some Problems in the Study of the Transition to Democracy', in Laurence Whitehead (ed.), Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives, London, Baltimore, 1986, pp. 47-63

Rakowska-Harmstone, Teresa, 'The Dialects of Nationalism in the USSR', in Rachel Denber (ed.), The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context, Boulder, Oxford, 1992, pp. 391-416

Rashid, Ahmed, Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia, London, 2003

Rashid, Ahmed, Taliban: The Story of the Afghan Warlords, 2001

Rivlin, Paul, 'Oil and Gas in the Economies of the Caspian Region', in Moshe Gammer (ed.), The Caspian Region: A Re-Emerging Region, London, New York, 2004, pp. 32-51

Roberts, John, Caspian Pipelines, London, 1996

Robins, Philip 'The Middle East and Central Asia' in Peter Ferdinand (ed.), The New Central Asia and its Neighbours, London, 1994, 55-74

Ro'i, Yaacov, 'Islam in the FSU: An Inevitable Impediment to Democracy?' in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia, London, New York, 2001, pp.101-116

Ro'i, Yaacov, Islam in the Soviet Union from Second World War to Perestroika, London, 2000

Ro'i, Yaacov, Islam in the CIS: A Threat to Stability, London, 2001

Roy, Olivier, 'Civil Society in Central Asia and the Greater Middle East', International Affairs, vol. 81, no. 5, October 2005, pp. 1001-1012

Roy, Olivier, Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah, London, 2004

Roy, Olivier, 'Present Patterns of Islamism in Central Asia', in Hannah Carter and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), The Middle East's Relations with Asia and Russia, London, New York, 2004

Rubin, Barnett R., Blood on the Doorstep, New York, 2002

Rubinstein, Alvin, 'Assessing Influence as a Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis', in Alvin Z. Rubinstein (ed.), Soviet and Chinese Influence in the Third World, New York, Washington, London, 1975, pp. 1-22

Rumer, Boris, 'The Search for Stability in Central Asia', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia: A Gathering Storm?, Armonk, NY, 2002, pp. 3-66

Rumer, Boris, 'The Powers in Central Asia', Survival, vol. 44, no. 3, Autumn 2002, pp. 57-68

- Russell, John, 'Exploitation of the Islamic Factor in the Russo-Chechen Conflict Before and After 11 September 2001', European Security, London, vol.11, no.4, Winter 2002, pp. 96-109
- Rybkin, Ivan, Consent in Chechnya. Consent in Russia, Moscow, 1998
- Sabol, Steven, 'Turkmenistan: Going it Alone', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 50.no. 5, September/October 2003, pp. 48-57
- Sakwa, Richard, Russian Politics and Society, London, New York, 2002
- Sakwa, Richard, Putin: Russia's Choice, London, New York, 2004
- Sakwa, Richard, Post-Communism, Buckingham, Philadelphia, 1999
- Salame, Ghassan, 'Introduction: Where are the Democrats?' in Ghassan Salame (ed.), Democracy Without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World, London, New York, 1994, pp. 1-20
- Sarkar, Bhaswati and Shams-Ud-Din, Afghanistan and Central Asia in the New Great Game, New Delhi, 2003
- Schroeder, Gertrude, 'Economic Transformation in the Post-Soviet Republics', in Bartlomiej Kaminski (ed.), Economic Transition in Russian and the New States of Eurasia, Armonk, NY, London, 1996, pp. 11-41
- Schroeder, Gertrude, 'Nationalities and the Soviet Economy', in Rachel Denber (ed.), The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context, Boulder, Oxford, 1992, pp. 261-286
- Schumpeter, Joseph A., Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, London, 1976
- Seely, Robert, Russo-Chechen Conflict, 1800-2000, London, Portland, OR, 2001

Sestanovich, Stephen, 'Promoting Democracy', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, 2003, pp. 149-156

Shearman, Peter, 'Defining the National Interest: Russian Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics', in Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (eds.), The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London, 1997, pp. 1-27

Shoemaker, M Wesley, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, New York, 2004

Skrine, F.H and Ross, E.D, The Heart of Asia, London, 1899

Singleton, F. Seth, 'Russia and Asia: The Emergence of 'Normal Relations'?' in Roger E. Kanet and Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (eds.), The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London, 1997, pp. 102-124

Smelser, N., The Theory of Collective Behaviour, New York, 1963

Smith, M A, 'Russian Foreign Policy 2000: The Near Abroad', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, December 2000

Smith, M A, 'Russia, The USA and Central Asia', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, May 2002

Smith, M A, 'Russia's Energy Diplomacy', Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, March 2002

Spechler, Martin C., 'Free at Last: Uzbekistan and Russia', Problems of Post-Communism, vol. 49, no.1, January-February 2002, pp. 63-67

Splidsboel-Hansen, Flemming, 'Central Asian Islam and Security: The Official Russian Concept of Contemporary Central Asian Islam', Europe -Asia Studies, vol.49, no.8, July 1997, pp. 1501-1517

Starr, Frederick S., 'Tsarist Government: The Imperial Dimension', in Jeremy R. Azrael (ed.), Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices, New York, 1978, pp. 3-34

Starr, Fredrick S., 'Making Eurasia Stable', Foreign Affairs, vol. 75, no.1, January/February 1996, pp. 80-92

Starr, Fredrick S., 'Civil Society in Central Asia', in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.), Civil Society in Central Asia, Seattle, London, 1999, pp. 27-33

Stepan, Alfred and Robertson, Graeme B., 'Arab, Not Muslim, Exceptionalism', Journal of Democracy, vol. 15, no. 4, October 2004, pp. 140-146

Stoessinger, John G., The Might of Nations: World Politics in Our Times, New York, 1975

Stoliarov, Mikhail, Federalism and the Dictatorship of Power in Russia, London, New York, 2003

Taheri, Amir, Crescent in the Red Sky: The Future of Islam in the Soviet Union, London, 1989

'Tajikistan', Jane's Sentinel: Russia and the CIS, Coulsdon, Surrey, 1996, section 9.0.3

Tevzadze, Zurab 'Caspian Oil: Its Export Routes and Transportation Problems', Central Asia and the Caucasus, no. 1(25), 2004

Tishkov, Valery, Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society, London, 2004

Trenin, Dmitri, 'Southern Watch: Russia's Policy in Central Asia', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 119-131

Trenin, Dmitri, and Malashenko, Aleksei, Russia's Restless Frontier: The Chechen Factor in Post-Soviet Russia, Washington, D.C, 2004

'Turkmenistan', Jane's Sentinel: Russia and the CIS, Coulsdon, Surrey, 1996, section 10.8.10

Umnov, Alexander, 'Islamic Fundamentalism, Ethnicity, and the State: the Cases of Tajikistan, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan', Ethnic Challenges Beyond Borders, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1998, pp. 112-122

Vardys, Stanley, 'Lithuanian National Politics', in Rachel Denber (ed.), The Soviet Nationality Reader: The Disintegration in Context, Boulder, Oxford, 1992, pp. 441-483

Verme, Paolo, 'Macroeconomic Policies and Social Unrest in Uzbekistan', Post Soviet Affairs, vol. 22, no. 3, July-September 2006, pp 276-287

Viotti, Paul R. and Kauppi, Mark V., International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond, Boston, London, 1999

Walker, Edward W, 'Islam, Islamism and Political Order in Central Asia', Journal of International Affairs, vol. 56, no. 2, Spring 2003, pp. 21-41

Wallander, Celeste A., 'Silk Road, Great Game or Soft Underbelly? The New US-Russian Relationship and Implications for Eurasia', Journal of SouthEast European and Black Sea Studies, London, vol.3, no.3, Sept 2003, pp. 92-104

Waterbury, John, 'Democracy Without Democrats?: The Potential for Political Liberalisation in the Middle East', in Ghassan Salame (ed.), Democracy Without

Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World, London, New York, 1994, pp. 23-47

Weisbrode, Kenneth, Central Asia: Prize or Quicksand? New York, 2001

Wheeler, Geoffrey, The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia, London, 1964

Wheeler, Geoffrey, The People of Soviet Central Asia, London, 1966

Whitehead, Laurence, 'International Aspects of Democratisation' in Laurence Whitehead (ed.), Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives, London, Baltimore, 1986, pp. 3-46

Zagorski, Andrei, 'Regional Structures of Security Policy Within the CIS', in Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth (eds.), Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia, London, 1998, pp. 283-300

Zhao, Huasheng, 'Security Building in Central Asia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation', in Shinichiro Tabata and Akihiro Iwashita (eds.), Slavic Eurasia's Integration into the World Economy and Community-Slavic Eurasian Studies 2, Tokyo, 2004, pp. 283-314

Zhiltsov, Sergey, 'Russia in the Caspian', Central Asia and the Caucasus, no. 4(28), 2002

Zviagel'skaia, Irina, 'Russia and Central Asia: Problems of Security', in Boris Rumer (ed.), Central Asia at the End of Transition, New York, 2005, pp. 71-92

NEWSPAPERS, NEWS SERVICES (ELECTRONIC AND NON-ELECTRONIC) AND ELECTRONIC JOURNALS

Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections: News and Trends: Central Asia,
<http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/news/ntc22446.htm>

Al-Jazeera.Net, <http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>

The Almaty Herald

Arab Studies Quarterly, <http://www.emich.edu/asquarterly/>

ArtUkraine.com, <http://www.artukraine.com/buildukraine/kuzio6.htm>

Asia Times Online, <http://www.atimes.com/>

BBC Monitoring, <http://www.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>

BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The Bishkek Observer

Caspian Business Report,
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/HOMEPAGES/USAZERB/cbr.htm>

Caspian Crossroads Magazine,
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/usazerb/141.htm>

Caspian Development and Export,
<http://www.caspiandevlopmentandexport.com/ASP/BTC.asp>

Caspian Sea Overview,

<http://www.treemedia.com/cfrlibrary/homepage/overview/q2.html>

Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?SMSESSION=NO>

Central Asia and the Caucasus, <http://www.ca-c.org/journale.shtml>

Central Asia Newsfile

Center for Defence Information: Russia Weekly, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/195-7.cfm>

Centre for Research on Globalisation: Online Journal,
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=home>

CNSNEWS.Com, <http://www.cnsnews.com/>

CNN.com, <http://edition.cnn.com/>

Conciliation Resources, <http://www.c-r.org/>

The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press

Daily Times, <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=archives>

The Economist

The Economist Intelligence Unit

Eurasia Media Forum, <http://www.eamedia.org/index2.php>

Eurasianet.org, <http://www.eurasianet.org/index.shtml>

Eurasia Daily Monitor, <http://www.jamestown.org/edm/>

Financial Times

GlobalSecurity.org, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/index.html>

Guardian Unlimited, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

The Heritage Foundation: Policy Research and Analysis, <http://www.heritage.org/>

Human Rights News, <http://www.hrw.org/>

Human Rights Watch, <http://hrw.org/>

Institute for the Analysis of Global Security: Energy Security,
<http://www.iags.org/n1104041.htm>

International Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research,
http://iicas.org/libr_en/geopolit/01_10_03.htm

International Herald Tribune

International Information Programs, <http://usinfo.state.gov/404.html>

IslamOnline.net, <http://islamonline.net/English/index.shtml>

Islamic Republic News Agency, <http://www.arab2.com/n/iran-newspapers/irna-islamic-republic-news-agency.htm>

Itar-Tass News Agency, <http://www.tass.ru/eng/>

International Research and Exchanges Board, <http://www.irex.org/>

The Jamestown Foundation, <http://www.jamestown.org/index.php>

Kennan Institute: Meeting Report,

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1424&fuseaction=topics.publications&group_id=7718

Keston News Service, <http://www.starlightsite.co.uk/keston/>

Kyrgyzstan News: Comprehensive Development Framework and National Poverty Reduction Strategy, <http://cdf.gov.kg/en/>

Language and Ethnicity Issues in Tajikistan,
http://www.ismaili.net/mirrors/112_tajik/tajkethn.html

Middle East Forum, <http://www.meforum.org/>

MosNews.Com, <http://mosnews.com/>

The Moscow Times.com, <http://themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/04/11/042.html>

The Muslim News, <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/>

Muslim Uzbekistan, <http://www.muslimuzbekistan.net/en/index.php>

NATO Multimedia Video Interviews, <http://www.nato.int/multi/video/2004/040910-simmons/v040910e.htm>

New Straits Times-Malaysia News Online, <http://www.nst.com.my/>

Official Kazakhstan, <http://www.president.kz>

Observer Research Foundation, <http://www.observerindia.com/index.htm>

People's Daily, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/>

Pravda, <http://english.pravda.ru/>

Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, <http://www.rferl.org/>

Radio Tashkent International, <http://ino.uzpak.uz/>

RAI-Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20050606/40477558.html>

Religious Freedom World Report, <http://www.religiousfreedom.com/wrpt/fsu.htm>

Reuters, <http://today.reuters.com/news/home.aspx>

Tajikistan: Information Resource,
http://tajikistan.tajnet.com/english/news/arhiv_news.htm

Templeton Thorp, <http://www.templetonthorp.com/ru/news982>

Transitions Online,
<http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/home.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=174>

The Times of Central Asia

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,
<http://www.unescap.org/index.asp>

USA Today, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/front.htm>

The Washington Times, <http://www.washtimes.com/>

The Washington Quarterly, <http://www.twq.com/>

WorldPress.Org, http://www.worldpress.org/specials/pp/pipeline_timeline.htm

Z Magazine: Commentary Online, <http://zmagsite.zmag.org/Images/grosso0605.html>